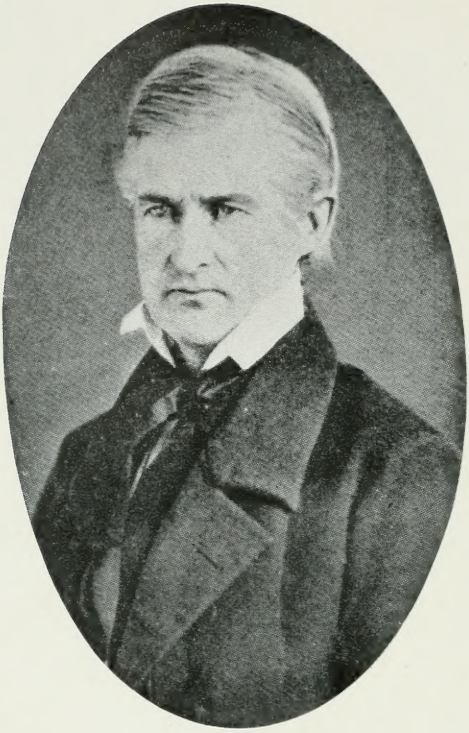


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SOLON ROBINSON, 1841

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Volume XXI

SOLON ROBINSON
PIONEER AND AGRICULTURIST

Volume I
1825-1845

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PIONEER and AGRICULTURIST

SELECTED WRITINGS

Edited by

HERBERT ANTHONY KELLAR
Director, McCormick Historical Association
Chicago, Illinois

VOLUME I
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To My Mother

FOREWORD

THE inception of the publication of writings of Solon Robinson came about in 1926 at a meeting of the American Historical Association at Rochester, New York. In the session devoted to an "Agricultural Who's Who in the Ante-Bellum Period," the statement of Herbert A. Kellar that Robinson was the most important agricultural writer of that period in the North met with general acceptance. Robinson's extensive travels in the South, also, his observations upon the plantation system, and his efforts to work up common agricultural interests in both sections were of national significance. The late Ulrich B. Phillips, of Yale University, whose judgment upon such matters commanded the greatest respect, in expressing his agreement with Mr. Kellar, urged the publication of Robinson's writings. His interest in the project continued down to the time of his last illness. There have also been recurrent suggestions in the Agricultural History Society that such a publication would be a valuable contribution to the history of agriculture in the United States.

These considerations, together with the fact that Robinson was one of the leading pioneers of Indiana, led the Indiana Historical Bureau to decide on the publication of two volumes devoted to him and his writings. Mr. Kellar, previous to the meeting already referred to, had gathered together in the McCormick Historical Association Library, at Chicago, a large collection of Robinson's writings and was recognized as the leading authority upon the subject. He was accordingly asked to undertake the work. We are indebted to him for an important contribution to the history of Indiana and to the history of agriculture in the United States at large.

Solon Robinson is not as well known in Indiana as he should be. Timothy Ball, in his *History of Lake County,*

gave him much attention. A. F. Knotts, former mayor of Hammond, has also emphasized his importance. Outside the Calumet region, however, Robinson has been less known in Indiana than in other states where there has been more interest in agricultural history. After a short, but varied, career at Madison and at his projected town of Solon, he settled in the northwestern part of the state, and played an important part in the early development of the region near Lake Michigan. The experiences of Solon Robinson as a pioneer settler—a squatter, in fact—in Lake County, were typical of early life in northwestern Indiana. The history of settlement on the prairie land is quite different from that of settlement in the forests of the central and southern part of the state. No one was better qualified than he to describe it. He was also the founder of Crown Point. His writings are a memorial, therefore, to both the rural and town forerunners of the present great industrial development along the southern bend of Lake Michigan.

Solon Robinson was a man of varied talents. He wrote on many subjects and sometimes used the vehicles of fiction and poetry. The collection herewith presented is necessarily a selection made from a far larger body of writings. It is hoped, however, that the result will give the reader a satisfactory insight into the diversified activities of Robinson, as well as a knowledge of agricultural conditions and improvements urged before the Civil War. The period covered in these two volumes ends with Robinson's departure from Indiana and the beginning of his career as an agricultural editor. His later writings are more accessible, and it is hoped that they may be published under other auspices. The growing interest in agricultural history—one of the many foundations for permanent agricultural improvement in the United States—leads one to expect a general use of the work of this pioneer agriculturist.

CHRISTOPHER B. COLEMAN,
Director of the Historical Bureau

PREFACE

IN THE course of a long and active interest in the history of American Agriculture, I have been impressed with the personality and achievements of a group of men living for the most part in the ante-bellum period, whose whole-hearted and unselfish devotion to the cause of agricultural improvement won them national recognition in their own time. As a nation we shall be fortunate if in future we can point to the equals of such men as John Taylor of Caroline, John S. Skinner, Edmund Ruffin, Jesse Buel, Martin W. Philips, Thomas Affleck, Andrew Jackson Downing, John S. Wright, Benjamin P. Johnson, and last, but not least, Solon Robinson. Biographies of Taylor have been written by William E. Dodd and H. H. Simms, and Ruffin has his chronicler in Avery O. Craven. I take pleasure in presenting Solon Robinson of Indiana. You will find that he was a man of parts.

Native of Connecticut, pioneer in southern Indiana, founder of Crown Point and leading citizen of Lake County, nationally known as an experimental farmer, traveler, lecturer, and writer on agricultural subjects; journalist, novelist, and short-story writer extraordinary, Robinson's career up to 1851, which is chiefly covered here, is so interwoven with the story of Indiana and the nation, as to present a fascinating panorama of American civilization North and South.

The preparation of this study has necessitated extensive research and not a little travel, including visits to the majority of counties in Indiana and regions farther afield, such as Ohio, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Washington, D. C., and Florida. So many have contributed, both in large and small degree, to the final substance of the work that it is in truth a coöperative product. To mention all who have taken an interest in the undertaking would be impracticable. For in-

spiration and early encouragement I am grateful to my good friend, the late Ulrich B. Phillips, of Yale University. Lucile O'Connor Kellar has rendered more aid than any other one individual. Her industry, gift for research, and wise counsel in all the various stages of preparation have proved invaluable. Christopher B. Coleman, director of the Indiana Historical Bureau, has from the first recognized the importance of the work and has given unfailing support. Miss Nellie Armstrong, editor of the Bureau, has worked with me in the editing and arranging of materials, and Miss Dorothy Riker, also of the Bureau, has likewise aided in preparing the manuscript for printing. Miss Esther U. McNitt, of the Division of Indiana History and Archives, Indiana State Library, and her associates have answered inquiries involving extensive research. Unflagging interest has been displayed by William J. Hamilton, librarian of the Gary Public Library, and his collection of material relating to Lake County has furnished records not found elsewhere. A. F. Knotts, of Yankeetown, Florida, kindly placed at my disposal documents and notes which contained unique data. Miss Claribel R. Barnett, librarian of the United States Department of Agriculture, lent rare volumes of periodicals, and others were supplied by the University of Illinois, and the John Crerar Library of Chicago. Mrs. Albert S. Field, of Brooklyn, Connecticut, made available early Robinson family records. To the descendants of Solon Robinson in Crown Point and Gary, Indiana, as well as to citizens of these cities, I am especially indebted for information and documents. Charles and Martine O'Connor have assisted in research and copying. Lastly, I have had the loyal and able assistance of the members of my staff, Miss Loraine C. Weber, Miss Rose Oenning, Miss Marie Succo, and Miss Grace O'Brien, as occasion required.

HERBERT A. KELLAR

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
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SOLON ROBINSON

SOLON ROBINSON

SOLON ROBINSON, born in Tolland, Connecticut, on October 21, 1803, traced his descent from good pioneer stock.[1] Seventh in direct line from John Robinson, a respectable citizen of Sturton, Nottinghamshire, England, his earliest ancestor in America was the Reverend John Robinson, of Leiden, pastor of the Pilgrims. Concerning Isaac, son of the pastor, little is known beyond the fact that he was born in Leiden in 1610, and died at Barnstable, Massachusetts, in 1704, a span of existence which offers reasonable proof of a toughness of fiber superior to the privations of settlement in a new land, the rigors of winter in New England, the horrors of Indian attack, and the intolerances of theological controversy. Peter, offspring of Isaac, a weaver by trade, emigrated from Massachusetts to become one of the earliest settlers of Windham, Connecticut, where he died in 1740.[2] Peter the Second, born at Tisbury, Massachusetts, in 1697, became a farmer near Windham, and in time achieved a considerable estate. Too old to serve in the Revolutionary War, he supplied clothing to the soldiers and also acted as commissary to the Army. He was active until his death in his eighty-eighth year.[3] Jacob, grandfather of Solon, who was born in 1734 and died in 1809, continued the family residence at Windham,

[1] For information concerning Solon Robinson's ancestry, see *Robinson Genealogy; Descendants of the Rev. John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrims*, volume 1 (The Robinson Genealogical Society [Boston, 1926]).

[2] *Ibid.*, 1:51-53; Connecticut Archives: Ecclesiastical, 1659-1789, vol. 4:doc. 107a.

[3] *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:58-59; Connecticut Archives: Militia Papers, 1678-1788, docs. 1284a, 1284b, 1284c; *ibid.*, Travel, 1700-1788, vol. 2:doc. 17; vol. 3:doc. 316b; *ibid.*, Ecclesiastical, 1732, vol. 4:117-19; *ibid.*, Revolutionary War, 1763-1789, vol. 35:docs. 49a, 249e; *ibid.*, Windham Probate District Court Records, 1778, no. 3238.

held the office of sealer of weights and measures, and was otherwise prominent in the community. A soldier in the Revolution, he, like his father, on occasion sold provisions to the Army.[1]

Jacob the Second, born at Windham in 1772, died in Tolland in 1809, surviving his father by only a few months.[2] On June 14, 1796, he married Salinda Ladd, of Coventry, born in 1772. Solon Robinson was the fourth of their five children. Jacob Robinson, at his death, left his widow with this sizeable family and very little property.[3] Two years later, Salinda married the more affluent James Robinson, a cousin of her first husband.[4] She lived only two years to enjoy her prosperity, and Solon became an orphan at the age of ten.[5] James, who had one child by Salinda, was henceforth apparently unwilling to support his stepchildren, and on March 15, 1815, Captain William Bottom, of Lisbon, whose wife was Jacob Robinson's sister, was appointed guardian for the young boy.[6] Solon helped on the farm and became skillful with tools through an apprenticeship to the carpenter trade, an occupation which he was forced to discontinue because the work was too hard on his health.[7] In a poem written many years later,

[1] Town of Windham, Connecticut: Family Records, 1756-1778, vol. 2:302; Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, 1763-1789, vol. 6:doc. 458a; vol. 35:docs. 49, 171; Tolland, Connecticut, Town Records of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1792-1850, p. 37.

[2] *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:145.

[3] *Ibid.;* Papers relating to estate of Jacob Robinson, 1809-1814, in possession of Mrs. A. S. Field, Brooklyn, Connecticut; Connecticut Archives: Stafford Probate District Court Records, Tolland, 1810, no. 1805.

[4] *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:145.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Connecticut Archives: Norwich Probate District Court Records, March 15, 1815, no. 9366.

[7] *The National Cyclopædia of American Biography*, 3:454 (James T. White & Company, New York, 1893); *The Cyclopædia of American Biography*, volume 5 (New York, 1915); Knotts, A. F., "Solon Robinson. An Address delivered . . . at Crown Point, August 27, 1921."

Solon refers to his attendance at a little red schoolhouse near Lisbon, an accident in a sawmill in which he was nearly killed, a boyhood love affair with a pretty cousin, and to other incidents of that time.[1] We may surmise that the years of his sojourn with Captain Bottom, in part at least, were fairly pleasant.

This stewardship came to an end in 1818, as a petition was made by Solon (for reasons not apparent) on July 18, requesting that his uncle, Vine Robinson, of Brooklyn, Connecticut, be appointed his guardian. This request was duly granted.[2] A leading citizen of the community, a merchant, and a judge of the county court, Vine Robinson was noted for his integrity and intelligence and on several occasions represented his town in the legislature.[3] His home at Brooklyn is still in existence, and is occupied at present by one of his descendants, Mrs. Albert S. Field. While it is not definitely known that Solon lived in this house, it is probable that he did, since his description of a New England kitchen of his boyhood, published in *The Plow* in 1852, corresponds so closely to one in the Field house as to be clearly recognizable.[4] Association with his uncle's family in his formative years brought Solon into close contact with the best society that Brooklyn afforded, and it is perhaps due to hearing Vine Robinson's pronounced advocacy of the principles of temperance that we later find Solon a devotee of this cause.[5]

[1] "Have You Forgotten When," written from Jacksonville, Florida, to Mrs. Caroline S. Fitch, Anoka, Minnesota, November, 1876. Robinson bore the scars of the sawmill accident until his death.

[2] Connecticut Archives: Pomfret Probate District Court Records, Brooklyn, August 4, 1818, no. 3462.

[3] Vine Robinson was born in Windham, Connecticut, July 25, 1767, and died in Brooklyn, Connecticut, January 18, 1843. *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:145-46.

[4] April, 1852, pp. 106-7; New York *American Agriculturist*, October, 1851 (10:298-99).

[5] Larned, Ellen D., *History of Windham County, Connecticut . . .*, 2:475-77 (Worcester, Mass., 1880).

The data about Solon from the time Vine Robinson became his guardian in 1818 to 1830 is meager when contrasted with the full record of his later life. Entries in an account book purchased in 1825 indicate that he was in Lisbon and New London, Connecticut, in that year, and already sufficiently interested in the history of his family to record genealogical information about them.[1] Tradition has it that he became a Yankee peddler about this time and wandered West.[2]

We know he was in Cincinnati in 1827, for on September 29 of that year he advertised in the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette* for a lost wallet "containing all the *Cash*" he had. Eight months later, on May 17, 1828, to be exact, the same paper announced his marriage to Mariah Evans, of Philadelphia, daughter of Thomas and Keziah Evans.[3] Mariah, born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, on November 16, 1799, was well educated for that day, and had for some time been a governess in the family of Joseph Jefferson.[4] Four years older than her husband, a woman of strong character and refinement, Mariah Evans was a worthy helpmate to Solon in the early years of his career. Just why and when the latter went to Cincinnati, how he became acquainted with Mariah, and what he did for a living in the Queen City are all questions of interest, but records and family tradition throw little light on these years. The Cincinnati *Directory* of 1829 lists him as a clerk, a fact which is consistent with family legend that he was a cashier in a theater. If this is true, it may

[1] Robinson Account or Memorandum Book, Norwich and New London, Connecticut, March 21, 1825, p. 5, in Harry Robinson Strait Collection.

[2] Verplank, Charlotte Wheeler (great-great-granddaughter of Solon Robinson), "Solon Robinson—The Founder," in *Lake County Star*, centennial edition, Crown Point, August 17, 1934; Knotts, "Solon Robinson."

[3] The *Cincinnati Gazette* gives her name as "Mrs. M. Evans," but the *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:182-83, does not mention an earlier marriage.

[4] Statement of Mrs. Cora Lincoln, Crown Point, April 8, 1929.

account for his meeting with the lady who became his wife.

Robinson left Cincinnati early in the year 1830 and took up his residence in Indiana, where within little more than a decade he was destined to achieve fame and, if not fortune, at least a respectable livelihood for his family. Selecting Madison as his base of operations for the next few years, he soon became imbued with the craze for land so common in the West of that period. On February 20, 1830, he purchased at the United States Land Office at Jeffersonville, Indiana, eighty acres in Jennings County, lying about thirteen miles northwest of Vernon on the Columbus Post Road between Madison and Indianapolis.[1] Lease of an adjoining tract at Rock Creek Ford was added on May 3, by private purchase from one John Bradford. This second tract contained dwellings and stables, of which Bradford promised to give possession by June 10.[2] A post office was established at Rock Creek Ford on June 14, 1830, with Robinson as postmaster.[3] On March 11 of the following year, as road commissioner, Robinson advertised for bids to clear timber, bushes, and stumps for a ten-and-a-half-mile section of the Madison and Indianapolis State Road between Sand Creek and Clifty.[4]

As early as April 15, 1831, Robinson had the Rock Creek Ford tract surveyed, divided into lots, streets laid out, and the whole recorded in the Jennings County recorder's office as the town of Solon.[5] The first sale of lots, which was to take place on June 4, was widely advertised by posters, handbills, and a prominent notice

[1] William Lewis, register, to Solon Robinson, February 20, 1830, Certificate No. 1898; and United States to Solon Robinson, March 9, 1831, letters patent. General Land Office Records, Washington, D. C.

[2] John Bradford to Robinson, May 3, 1830, agreement to transfer land, Strait Collection.

[3] List of Indiana Post Offices, Indiana State Library.

[4] *Post*, 45.

[5] Deed Record Book B, p. 222.

in the *Indiana Republican* of May 5.[1] Buyers were few, however, and the town of Solon remained as it had begun, with Robinson its chief resident.

Lewis David von Schweinitz, naturalist and Moravian church worker, who visited the town of Solon on June 1, 1831, and stayed at the cabin of Solon Robinson, evidently found his host an unusual individual and one not altogether to his liking. He records in his journal: "We had our breakfast in a building which externally was quite an ordinary cabin, built and roofed with logs. Inside, however, everything was very respectable and even elegant, as this building is the new town of Solon, the printed advertisements for which we had come across everywhere recently. We would have noted with pleasure the valuable library of the owner, if the atheist newspapers of Miss Frances Wright, lying about in profusion, and public effusions against clergy, temperance society, etc., had not shown how, even here, the lamentable reaction against the exaggerations of the times is producing its injurious effects and most sadly increasing the confusion of mind generated by religious contentiousness."[2]

Reluctant to concede the defeat of his plans, Robinson for some time fought valiantly to make his town a reality. That he was eventually convinced his talents lacked opportunity in Jennings County is suggested by an advertisement in a Madison paper of October 25, 1832, extolling his virtues as a landlord and tavern keeper at Solon, but revealing that he continued there only because the individual who had agreed to purchase his "stand" had backed out.[3]

For another year Robinson lived in Jennings County. Only a few incidents of interest have come down to us for that period. On March 18, 1833, he acquired full

[1] *Post*, 46.

[2] *Journey . . . to Goshen, Bartholomew County in 1831*, 233-34 (*Indiana Historical Society Publications*, 8:no. 5, Indianapolis, 1927).

[3] *Post*, 48.

title to another tract of land bought at a tax sale on November 8, 1830.[1] The *Indiana Republican* on June 20 and July 4 printed communications from Robinson concerning the murder of one John Comer of Rock Creek Township. To his second communication Robinson appended the moral, "It seems to be the general opinion that *whiskey,* that curse of this land, was the primary cause of this black deed."

As late as September 30, Robinson was listed as postmaster of his town,[2] but by November he had left Jennings County to take up his abode in Madison. Here, as indicated by an advertisement in the *Indiana Republican* of November 21, he conducted an auction house, receiving and selling goods on consignment.[3] His stock, as shown by numerous newspaper notices in the course of the next year, included furniture, clothing, musical instruments, dry goods, and stationery. He also acted as agent for the sale of urban and rural property, cattle, and various frontier appurtenances. On occasion he sold books and served as representative for a periodical and circulating library. Evidently the Madison Auction Rooms were not always favored with cash or reliable customers, for on December 19, 1833, Robinson threatened in the *Republican and Banner* to publish a black list of "bidders, not buyers," particularly those who had taken goods away and had not paid for them.

Owing to Robinson's ill health, the auction rooms were closed in the early part of January, 1834, but later in the month he again advertised sales, offering a wide range of opportunity to prospective buyers. Perhaps the most intriguing of these advertisements was one for "a large Invoice of splendid Jewelry, belonging to a widow lady about leaving the U. States, which must be

[1] Record Book C, 42-43, Recorder's Office, Jennings County.

[2] *Register of All Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States, on the thirtieth of September, 1833* . . . (Philadelphia, 1834). His compensation for the year amounted to $4.74.

[3] *Post,* 48 ff.

sold without reserve."[1] Our knowledge does not cover public answer to this ingenious appeal, but the presumption is that Robinson, as a good auctioneer, rose to the occasion and in due season provided the "wherewithal" for the lady's journey.

February saw no lessening of these activities, either in number or in scope of property offered for sale, but on June 5, due to persistent illness, he announced a temporary discontinuation of the auction business and did not again resume this profession.[2]

Discouraged, perhaps, by failure to set the world afire with the town of Solon, and likewise by the confinement of town life and the effect of the damp climate of the Ohio River upon his health, Robinson now resolved to seek his fortune anew as a pioneer in northwestern Indiana. Accordingly, in the fall of 1834 we find the Robinson family slowly wending its way with ox team and horses toward the lands bordering the southern end of Lake Michigan. The story of that journey, momentous for Solon and others to follow—how he found his first destination, Door Prairie, unsuitable for a new home, and how, by deflection as it were, he took up his abode in the region later known as Lake County—is told with interest and charm in his letters of December 16, 1834, and February 25, 1835, published in the Madison *Republican and Banner*.[3]

It is enough to say here that while Robinson was not the first to settle in that locality, he was among the first, and from the time of his arrival things began to happen. Other settlers soon followed—among them Solon's brother Milo[4]—and the business of building log cabins, clearing land and planting crops, living, loving, and hating, went forward seriously, if not merrily, on every side. A born leader of men for such a frontier com-

[1] *Republican and Banner*, Madison, January 23, 1834.

[2] *Post*, 50.

[3] *Post*, 51-57, 57-64.

[4] Milo Robinson was born March 13, 1801. He came to northwestern Indiana in November, 1835.

munity, Solon took a prominent part in almost every form of individual or corporate activity the settlement afforded for the next dozen years.

In this he was doubtless notably aided by his wife. Although at the time of arrival in her new home she did not possess any extensive experience in frontier housekeeping, she had an education of a type many of the other women lacked. Her knowledge of simple medicine and nursing and ability to do fine sewing and embroidery, combined with a spirit of helpfulness toward her neighbors, gave her prestige to such an extent that she was never willing to take up permanent residence elsewhere.[1]

A portion of the future Lake County had been ceded to the United States by treaty with the Potawatomi Indians in 1826; the remainder was added by the treaties of October 26 and 27, 1832.[2] When Solon Robinson and other individuals came to this region in 1834 they found government surveyors already at work, but for several years no resident had more than the tentative claim of a squatter, for the United States had not yet offered the land for sale. Aware of the fate of settlers in other frontier communities who had made the initial selection of fertile acreage, improved holdings, and later lost the fruits of their labor when speculators appeared at government sales to bid in their lands at prices the settlers could not pay, Robinson resolved to guard himself and his neighbors from any such contingency. Accordingly, he called a meeting at or near his home on July 4, 1836, of all the inhabitants of the region to consider protective measures. Solon presided, became a member of the committee which drew up the Constitution of the Squatters' Union, and was then elected register of claims. Four hundred and seventy-six individuals eventually signed

[1] *Crown Point Register*, March 7, 1872; statement of Mrs. J. J. Wheeler, April 8, 1929; Ball, Timothy H., *Lake County, Indiana, from 1834 to 1872*, 333-35 (Chicago, 1873).

[2] Kappler, Charles J. (ed.), *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties*, 2:273-77, 367-70, 372-75 (Washington, 1904).

the constitution, and due to the careful work of Robinson and his associates in registering descriptions of squatter lands and in settling disputes over current possession, speculators found scant encouragement for carrying on their operations.[1] In March, 1839, when the official sale of lands took place at La Porte, all bona fide settlers who desired to buy their holdings at the regular price of $1.25 an acre obtained them without competition.[2] Perhaps the attendance of Solon and his cohorts, well armed, helped to ease the situation.[3] This episode was to give Robinson the title, "King of the Squatters," a designation which everyone agreed he had fairly earned.

Repeated effort to deprive Solon of his own land was one of the reasons which influenced him to organize the Squatters' Union. He had settled upon and improved part of section 8, township 34 north, range 8 west. Shortly after his arrival, William Butler, a Michigan land speculator, hired one Huntley to come from Twenty Mile Prairie and erect the bodies of three log cabins upon section 8. Difficulty was averted when Huntley, in return for a payment of $75, agreed to leave. Butler, upon learning that Shobonier,[4] a Potawatomi chief, had lived at one time where Solon was now residing, and, further, that Shobonier had had two sections reserved to him "at his village" in the Treaty of October 20, 1832, attempted to have this reserve located on sections 8 and 17. If this

[1] The Constitution is printed *post*, 69-76.

[2] This sale did not cover the holdings of Robinson and a few of the other very early settlers, since they had already acquired title by compliance with the existing preëmption law and subsequent purchase from the United States before 1839.

[3] See Ball, *Lake County, 1834 to 1872*, 64-65; Goodspeed, Weston A., and Blanchard, Charles (eds.), *Counties of Porter and Lake, Indiana*, 405-12 (Chicago, 1882).

[4] This was not the famous Illinois chief, known as Shabonee, Shaubena, Shaubenay, etc. A reserve was made to Shabonee in the treaty of July 29, 1829. Kappler (ed.) *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties*, 2:298. The reserve to "Sho-bon-ier, two sections at his village," was made in the Treaty of October 20, 1832. None of the land ceded by this treaty was in Indiana. *Ibid.*, 2:353.

move should prove successful, he planned to present a claim, real or fancied, against Shobonier, to obtain legal title to the land. Although Indian reserves under the treaty applied only to lands in Illinois, Butler evidently hoped that an exception might be made to allow location in Indiana. Shobonier's refusal to indicate the site of his village doomed the speculator's plan to temporary failure, but the Indian's removal, with others of his tribe, west of the Mississippi in 1836 offered further opportunity.

Associating himself with one John Mann, Butler then induced the register at La Porte to forward a petition, undoubtedly fraudulent, but allegedly representing Shobonier and signed by his mark, to the General Land Office, requesting the president to issue a patent to Shobonier for sections 8 and 17, township 34 north, range 8 west, in Lake County. The petition was refused on the ground that the reservee could not be granted a patent for these lands under the treaties of 1832, and had no power to convey title to anyone but the United States. In 1838 the same petition was presented to the War Department. Again there was a refusal to recommend a patent, although promise was given to locate Shobonier's village and secure to him his rights under the treaty. Robinson, aroused by these attempts, successfully enlisted the aid of Albert S. White and other Indiana members of Congress, and stated his case to officials in Washington in a petition printed in this volume under date of November 4, 1837. Upon the fulfillment of preëmption requirements, in conjunction with his brother Milo, in November, 1838, he legally purchased the land where he had originally settled.

Robinson's friendly relations with Shobonier were undoubtedly a factor in the defeat of Butler. The Indian, in common with other Potawatomi chiefs, had several temporary camps or villages, one where the town of Crown Point was later established, another at Cedar Lake, and a third on the Kankakee in Illinois. When

Solon first came to northwest Indiana, he met Shobonier, then camping at Cedar Lake, was kind to him, gave him food and supplies, and otherwise acted as a good neighbor, with the result that the two became warm friends.

Shobonier at the time of the Treaty of 1832 evidently had some thought of eventually returning to the Crown Point site, but when he learned that his reserve could only be located in Illinois, he became reconciled to Solon's residence on section 8; this explains in part his refusal to aid Butler. In gratitude to Shobonier for his attitude, Solon promised to donate a "Commons" where the Indians had formerly played ball and engaged in other sports—a promise which he kept when the town of Crown Point was governmentally established in 1840. This was the spot where, as Solon relates, Shobonier's children and grandchildren played ball while the pioneer and the Indian watched their fun and smoked the pipe of peace together. It was Shobonier who called Solon "Wyonett Tshmokeman."[1]

Shobonier, in May, 1839, sent a bona fide petition from beyond the Mississippi, through John Dougherty, Indian Agent, offering to sell his two sections, still unlocated, to the United States. This transaction covered a long period, until after Shobonier's death, but in 1852 an appropriation of $1,600 was finally made to cover the purchase of the two sections for the benefit of his heirs.[2]

[1] "Wyonett Tshmokeman" is sometimes translated "Good Big Knife" or "Good White Man." This is on the authority of Joseph Nocktonick, Indian of the Potawatomi tribe, Mayetta, Kansas, and Chief Augustus, a Potawatomi of southern Michigan. J. William Lester to Herbert A. Kellar, April 26, May 4, 1929.

[2] Sources of information concerning the several attempts to deprive Robinson of his land, including the Shobonier incident, are widely scattered. Of first importance are Robinson's deposition, with affidavits, November 4, 1837 (printed *post*, 80-84), and his statement in A. O. Luther Scrapbook, clipping from the *Crown Point Register* [1878-1880]. Likewise valuable are references in "The Will," and in his articles of December 16, 1834, and February 25, 1835, to the Madison *Republican and Banner* (*post*, 168 ff., 51 ff. and 57 ff.); these are supported by additional

The land which the Robinsons purchased in 1838 comprised some 160 acres. Throughout his years in Lake County, Solon continued his interest in land transactions. Not only did he occasionally buy and sell land on his own responsibility, but he also acted with and for other individuals. For example, in 1844, with George Earle, he purchased and offered for sale a tract of 290 acres. This real estate venture was active until 1847 when the partnership was dissolved.[1] In 1843, Robinson became the representative of W. G. and G. W. Ewing, of Peru, Indiana, who had purchased large tracts of land in Lake County. Between that date and 1850, as their agent, he bought, sold, and traded for them as occasion offered.[2] Throughout the late thirties and forties he gradually increased his personal holdings in Lake County, and

pertinent material in his historical romance *Me-won-i-toc*, 5-6, 126-27, 131-32. Supplementing these papers are a number of records in the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.: Albert S. White to Joel R. Poinsett, October 16, 1837; James Whitcomb to Albert S. White, October 14, 15, 1837; Joel R. Poinsett to James Rariden, March 21, 23, 1838; Lewis Cass to John T. Douglass, June 25, 1836; Douglass to A. C. Pepper, April 30, 1838; Charles A. Harris to Douglass, January 20, 1837; Sho-bon-ier [signed by mark] Petition to His Excellency, the President of the United States [June 7, 1837]; Parks and Elwood to Luke Lea, July 29, 1851; Thomas H. Crawford to John Dougherty, July 7, 1839; Brief or Memorandum of Documents pertaining to Sho-bon-ier's Reserve, Washington, D. C., 1851; Office of Indian Affairs to Parks and Elwood, August 9, 1851. Other government records of interest are Jesse Jackson, Receiver's Office, La Porte, Indiana, Receipt No. 11715 to Milo and Solon Robinson for $200 for the northwest quarter, section 8, township 34 north, range 8 west, November 17, 1838; preëmption certificate No. 11715, Land Office, La Porte, November 17, 1838; United States to Milo and Solon Robinson, June 25, 1841, letters patent. See also U. S. *Statutes at Large*, 10:20.

[1] Solon Robinson Account Book, 1840-1853.

[2] W. G. and G. W. Ewing to Mr. Woods, February 17, 1843; W. G. and G. W. Ewing to Solon Robinson, February 18, 1843; Robinson to G. W. Ewing, February 21, 1844; Robinson affidavit, December 16, 1850. Ewing Papers, Indiana State Library.

in 1850 estimated these at 635 2/3 acres, with a value of approximately six thousand dollars.[1]

When Solon first settled in northern Indiana in 1834 he called the region "Oakland county." The prairie section in the vicinity of his cabin soon became known as "Robinson's Prairie" and as such it appears on contemporary maps.[2]

At the legislative session of 1835-36, Porter County was organized and Lake County formed from the western half of Porter and part of Newton. West Porter, or Lake, for judicial purposes, was attached to Porter County.

On April 13, 1836, the board of commissioners of Porter County divided Lake into three townships, and ordered each township to elect a justice of the peace. Solon Robinson, who lived in the central township, Clark, was elected justice for that district, an office which he held until the formal organization of the county. At the May session he is listed among the petit jurors of Porter County. At the same session he was made one of two overseers of the poor. Upon petition by Robinson to the commissioners, in July, 1836, additional territory was added to Clark Township.[3]

Lake County was organized under provisions of an act of January 18, 1837, effective February 15.[4] A vote for officers took place on March 28, resulting in Solon's election as county clerk, a position which he held until 1843. The Robinson brothers erected a log building in which to hold court and the first session took place in October.[5]

[1] Robinson Account Book, 1840-1853.

[2] *Post*, map facing page 352.

[3] Hamilton, William J., Notes from record of County Commissioners, Porter County, made in 1933; Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 50-51, 204; Goodspeed and Blanchard (eds.), *Counties of Porter and Lake*, 418-19.

[4] *Laws of Indiana*, 1835-36 (general), pp. 51, 84; 1836-37 (general), pp. 55-56. See Pence, George, and Armstrong, Nellie C., *Indiana Boundaries . . .*, 67, 550 (*Indiana Historical Collections*, volume 19, Indianapolis, 1933).

[5] Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 51, 204-6.

As county clerk Solon Robinson played an important part in the governmental life of the community. He kept his records with meticulous care and according to lawyers of present-day Lake County, they were written with a fullness, clarity, and neatness which has not been surpassed.

Establishment of a permanent county seat in Lake County was delayed for several years because so much of the land remained unsold. Finally, in 1839, the town of Liverpool was designated, but this aroused such dissatisfaction among the citizens of Lake that the legislature of 1839-40 ordered a relocation. The commissioners appointed for the purpose, in June, 1840, selected Lake Court House.[1] The site of the town, which was laid out at this time, included some forty acres of Robinson's land. This tract, with the holding of Judge William Clark, was divided into lots. Robinson generously donated half of his lots to the county for public use and added twenty acres adjoining for a like purpose. Lots in twenty acres retained by Robinson within the townsite, were then offered for sale, and in 1840, and subsequently, he sold a number of them. The selection of a name for the new county seat was left to the decision of George Earle, Solon Robinson, and Judge Clark, who chose Crown Point, and Lake Court House thereupon became Crown Point and has so remained to this day.[2]

A new mail route from Michigan City to Peoria, which passed through Robinson's Prairie, afforded Solon a welcome opportunity in 1836 to become a postmaster for a second time. He applied to the Indiana senators, William

[1] See Shockley, Ernest V., "County Seats and County Seat Wars in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 10:no. 1:34-35; Goodspeed and Blanchard (eds.), *Counties of Porter and Lake*, 426-28.

[2] Ball, *op. cit.*, 85-87; Robinson, Solon, "History of Lake County, 1833-1847," in *History of Lake County* (*Publication of the Lake County Historical Association*, volume 10, Gary, 1929); statement of Robinson in A. O. Luther Scrapbook. The name Crown Point was adopted locally in 1840, but the post office designation was not changed until June 26, 1845.

Hendricks, of Madison, and John Tipton, of Logansport, both of whom he knew well, and in March was appointed to the postmastership of Lake Court House, or, as it was usually written, Lake C. H. Postmaster's duties at first were light, consisting of occasional trips to Michigan City to take and bring back current accumulations. Financial returns, which were restricted to the proceeds of the office, were small, but the prestige and privileges attached to the position more than compensated for the obligations involved.[1] Robinson appreciated particularly the franking right which went with the office, and made such extensive use of it through his correspondence during the next few years, that the name Lake C. H. became familiar to thousands of farmers throughout the country. The duties of this office were capably performed, and Robinson's removal in 1843, because of his political affiliations, was publicly regretted by more than one editor of the agricultural periodicals to which he contributed.

In the early years of his residence in Lake County, Robinson was an ardent Whig, actively interested not only in local politics, but also in national elections. On March 28, 1840, he presided over a senatorial convention in Valparaiso. Illustrating the spirit of the times, the convention adopted the resolution, "That we have our political log cabin already raised, that next August we will roof it in, that next November we will chink Locofocos into the cracks, and that next March we will move into it."[2] Throughout the greater part of 1840 he sought, with success, to create favorable sentiment for General Harrison. In this connection Robinson wrote political articles and campaign songs, some of which were published in newspapers of the state.[3] With other Whigs from Lake and Porter counties he attended the famous

[1] Robinson, "History of Lake County, 1833-1847," *op. cit.*, 42-43.

[2] Packard, Jasper, *History of La Porte County, Indiana . . .*, 210 (La Porte, 1876).

[3] *Spirit of '76*, Indianapolis, April 25, 1840; *post*, 135, 136; manuscripts of campaign songs in possession of H. A. Kellar.

Log Cabin Convention at the Tippecanoe Battleground in May, and took a prominent part in the proceedings.[1]

Robinson had purchased a small printing press and some type, probably in 1836, and for several years published occasional handbills, and a newssheet written by himself. This sheet was variously known as the *Western Ranger* or the *Great Western.* He was a colorful figure at the Log Cabin Convention in 1840, riding about in a wagon with his press, printing and distributing to the crowd political songs which he had written for the occasion.[2] The press was acquired by James S. Castle, of Porter County, in 1842, who used it to publish the first paper in that county, known as the *Porter County Republican.*[3]

With his brother, Milo, Solon opened a general store for trade with the Indians and white settlers living in the vicinity. His experience in the auction rooms at Madison now proved of value. At the outset Robinson's store did a thriving business, selling over three thousand dollars worth of merchandise in the winter of 1836-37.[4] Milo Robinson's death from tuberculosis in January, 1839,[5] ended the partnership, but Solon continued to operate the store until 1850.[6] Indians were the most

[1] Journal of John Sutherland, La Porte, Indiana, part 2, May 23 to 28, 1840, La Porte County Historical Society; Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872,* 87.

[2] *Post,* 136 n; Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872,* 249; *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana,* 275 (Chicago, 1876).

[3] Goodspeed and Blanchard (eds.), *Counties of Porter and Lake,* 67. Shultz-Gay, Deborah H., *One of the Earliest Authentic Histories of Porter County, Indiana from 1832 to 1876,* 8 ([South Bend, 1927]), and *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Indiana,* 275, give the date as 1843.

[4] Robinson, "History of Lake County, 1833-1847," *op. cit.,* 44.

[5] *Ibid.,* 51.

[6] Robinson Account Book, 1840-1853. Timothy H. Ball in *Lake County, Indiana, 1884* . . ., 128 (Crown Point, 1884), states that Robinson's store came into the hands of H. S. Pelton about 1840. This statement does not seem to agree with Robinson's accounts, although Pelton may have operated the store for him after that date.

profitable customers prior to 1840, for many of the white settlers ran accounts which some of them were slow to pay or sought to default. The Indians, on the other hand, most of whom were Potawatomi, periodically brought in large quantities of cranberries and bundles of furs which they traded for articles of food, clothing, or ornaments. The cranberries were probably shipped by wagon to Peoria, Chicago, or Detroit.[1] Whether Robinson acted as an agent for John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Company, as one account states, or operated independently in the sale of his furs, is not definitely known, but he had no difficulty in disposing of the many choice skins which came to him.[2] By 1840 even wandering bands of Indians had departed from the region and the fur trade ceased to be an item of importance.

Robinson's accounts from 1840 to 1853 have been preserved. An examination of the store record shows that he handled a surprising variety of stock and that much of his business was done on a barter and exchange basis, very little actual currency changing hands. Likewise noticeable is the detail and exactness of the bookkeeping, fractions of a cent being regularly noted and carried over on the accounts. Profits of the store after 1840 were small, but they afforded Solon and his family a comfortable living.[3]

Von Schweinitz, in writing of his visit with Robinson in southern Indiana in 1831, criticised his host because of the presence in the cabin of atheistic and antitemperance literature.[4] Possibly a natural curiosity about everything and a desire to be informed on such subjects led Robinson to assemble the writings to which Von Schweinitz referred. There is nothing known about Solon's life to bear out the suggestion that he was irreligious. It is true he did not attach himself to any

[1] Robinson, "History of Lake County, 1833-1847," *op. cit.*, 44.
[2] *Post*, 65 n.
[3] Robinson Account Book, 1840-1853.
[4] See *ante*, 8.

religious denomination, but there is abundant evidence to show that he had a deep and abiding faith in Deity. When the Reverend Hawley B. Beers, of the Porter County Mission, visited Lake Court House in 1837, Robinson offered his cabin as a place of assembly for several meetings.[1] In his address before the settlers of Crown Point in 1847, he recalled in detail the development of religious worship in the county and criticised his fellow citizens severely for their backwardness in building adequate churches for public worship.[2] Again and again throughout his writings occur passages which indicate his religious faith.

Solon was likewise a lifelong advocate of temperance, and in June, 1841, joined with Norman Warriner and Hervey Ball to organize the Lake County Temperance Society. Meetings held in the log courthouse were well attended. This society had considerable influence in the community until superseded, about 1848, by a Division of the Sons of Temperance. Robinson contributed to the support of these organizations and was a leading figure in their deliberations.[3] One of the first of the activities sponsored by the Temperance Society was a Fourth of July celebration in 1841, held in a grove at Crown Point and attended by some three hundred persons.[4] Robinson's antipathy toward intemperance is reflected frequently in his writings, and there is no doubt of the sincerity of his convictions on this subject.

Although handicapped by fragile health and recurring periods of illness (he suffered from a tubercular tendency all his life), Robinson was endowed by nature with a forceful personality, and the varied experiences he encountered on the frontier tended to develop social qualities which stood him in good stead when he later

[1] Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 51; Robinson, "History of Lake County, 1833-1847," *op. cit.*, 47.

[2] *Ibid.*, 43, 47-48, 50, 56, 57, 58.

[3] Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 166; Goodspeed and Blanchard (eds.), *Counties of Porter and Lake*, 486.

[4] Robinson, *op. cit.*, 54; Ball, *Lake County, 1884*, 127.

became a public figure. He had little time for social amenities, yet when occasion offered could acquit himself with credit. As shown by his writings he liked the ladies and was popular with them as well. Among men he made occasional enemies because of the forthrightness and fearlessness with which he expressed his opinions, but with few exceptions the animosities he aroused were a credit to his character. Self-educated, for the most part, and naturally serious in temperament, he evidenced, when he chose, a dry humor and wit which made him a marked figure in any company.

As befitted a son of New England, Robinson strongly advocated education, both general and agricultural. In 1840, when the county seat was established at Lake Court House, he gave the community a lot for the erection of a school.[1] Careful provision for the future education of his children is an interesting feature of a will made in 1840, and they received the best schooling he could provide.[2]

Solon's literary activities, other than his agricultural writings, were not as extensive before 1851 as afterward. The political songs written in connection with the national election of 1840 were mostly doggerel verse, set to the meter of popular songs of the day, and although their subject matter is indicative of public concern with political events, they do not rank high as poetry. His first short story or miniature novel, entitled "The Will," appeared as a serial in the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, February 25-27, 1841, and the same year was reprinted in the *Indianapolis Semi-Weekly Journal*.[3] This intriguing story, which portrays scenes in New England, events in the West leading up to and subsequent to the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, and concludes with pioneer

[1] Robinson, "History of Lake County, 1833-1847," *op. cit.*, 53.

[2] The will is printed *post*, 124-27. Robinson's younger daughter, Leila, was sent to St. Mary's Academy, probably at Bertrand, Michigan. Leila Robinson in account with St. Mary's Academy, November, 1852–April, 1853.

[3] Printed *post*, 168-202.

conditions in Lake County at the period of its settlement in the early thirties, is based on firsthand experiences and displays an intimate knowledge of the Indian and the frontier. Several of the characters, such as General Harrison and Shobonier, were well-known figures of the time. "The Will," while it possesses some literary merit, is far more interesting for its general content than for plot or style.

A story pertaining to Indian life, written before 1851 under the title "The Last of the Buffaloes," has been lost to sight, possibly buried in an ancient newspaper file. It is to be hoped that some day this tale may be made available, for, judging from "The Will," it should present a suggestive picture of civilization on the prairies prior to white settlement.[1] Record also exists of an Emigrant Guide entitled *The Prairie Farmer,* which was prepared and published about 1850.[2] It is a fair presumption that the guide contained a compilation or résumé of a series of articles intended for the guidance of prospective settlers in the West which Robinson published in the *Cultivator, American Agriculturist, Farmers' Cabinet,* and *Prairie Farmer* between 1840 and 1845.[3]

An address which Solon delivered before the settlers of Lake County at Crown Point in 1847 offers recollections and observations on the genesis of a western county in the thirties and forties by one of its chief residents. Reasonably accurate in detail, and varied in content, this study of local history constitutes an informing record of the pioneer period of the Middle West, and has, ever since its appearance, been regarded as a basic document for the evolution of Lake County.

Statement has been made that Solon Robinson was not a practical farmer. The Reverend Timothy Ball and others interested in Lake County history expressed this

[1] Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872,* 282.

[2] No copy has been found. See *post,* 140 n.

[3] During this period Robinson published some twenty-one articles primarily designed for the guidance of emigrants.

opinion, although they freely admitted his celebrity as an agricultural writer. With regard to the quality of what was produced on his own land, this assertion need not be taken too seriously if we may judge by the grateful acknowledgments of gifts of early potatoes, Indian corn, apples, and peaches presented to editors; his introduction of Berkshire hogs in Lake County; and detailed accounts of his experiences in raising, slaughtering, curing, and marketing hogs. On the other hand, it is certainly true that owing to the diversity of his pursuits in Lake County, and his long absences while traveling, he was not able to farm on an extensive scale. Many of his agricultural activities were of an experimental nature. However, his success with what he did undertake was marked, and if he had chosen to devote all his attention to tilling the soil there is little doubt that he could have earned his living by that occupation alone.

The scope and variety of Robinson's experiments and investigations, reported from time to time in agricultural journals, is surprising. A method of curing beans, use of long manure, making saleratus and pearl ash, the washing and preservation of butter, grinding of corn meal, curing and pressing cheese, shearing sheep, raising oyster plant, development of a mammoth sunflower, building of a sod fence, insects injurious to crops, rust on wheat, planting of trees, farm implements, drainage, cultivating blue grass, production of sugar from beets, storing of grain and vegetables, innumerable recipes for cooking, observations on the weather, cultivation of flowers, feed for fattening cattle, home remedies for illness, and veterinary aids, are some subjects that may be noted.

Articles on rural architecture containing detailed plans for farmhouses, barns, fences, and gates, some of which represented structures built on his own land, others observed in use in various parts of the country, and still others, original with him, but untried, likewise came from his pen. In one instance he disclosed an inventive

faculty, presenting to the readers of the *Cultivator* a description and drawing of an improved root steamer of his own devising. Declining to take out a patent, he offered the utensil to the farming public for any use they might make of it.[1]

An ardent protagonist of agricultural organizations, Robinson vigorously urged their cause on every possible occasion. When the Union Agricultural Society was formed at Chicago in 1840 by John S. Wright, James T. Gifford,[2] William B. Ogden,[3] and others, Robinson generously gave his time for several years to assisting its activities. As official speaker at its annual meetings, promoter of the society in various sections of northern Illinois, judge at its fairs, and counselor at large, he rendered notable service in making the society an influential force in rural improvement.[4]

Possessed of vision beyond his time, Solon waged a valiant crusade in the late thirties and early forties to

[1] *Cultivator*, 7:92 (June, 1840).

[2] James T. Gifford, the "Father of Elgin" (Illinois), born about 1800; died August 11, 1850. Emigrated from New York to Illinois in 1835, and settled on the site of the present town of Elgin. Laid out the Galena Railroad as far as Belvidere. President of the Union Agricultural Society, 1842. Vice-president from Illinois of the National Agricultural Society, 1842. Contributor to *Union Agriculturist, Prairie Farmer,* and *Cultivator.* See *Commemorative Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois* . . . , 1014-26 (Beers, Leggett & Co., Chicago, 1888); *Elgin Courier News,* Centennial Edition, June 15, 1935.

[3] William Butler Ogden, railroad executive, born June 15, 1805, in Walton, New York; died August 3, 1877. Elected to New York legislature, 1834. Moved to Chicago in 1835. First mayor of Chicago, 1837. Elected president of the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, 1846, and of the Union Pacific Railroad, 1862. First president of Rush Medical College; charter member of Chicago Historical Society; state senator, 1860. See *Dictionary of American Biography,* 13:644-45.

[4] The official publication of the society was the *Union Agriculturist and Western Prairie Farmer,* the first number of which was issued at Chicago in October, 1840. Practically every issue had either a communication from Robinson, or some mention of his activities. See note on John S. Wright, *post,* 157 n.

develop a national society of agriculture, which was designed to foster, in turn, a national agricultural school and journal. This project was one of the most interesting of his career. The story of his initiation of this venture, its gradual development and culmination in official organization at Washington, and its subsequent failure, is covered in detail in the selections from his writings which appear hereafter, and need not be dealt with at length here.[1]

Robinson's pungent remarks on agricultural subjects, spiced with homely wit and humor, brought him considerable reputation as an orator. Beginning with 1840 he gave numerous addresses in widely separated regions of the country, at agricultural society meetings and fairs, and before other organizations interested in farm topics. The Union Agricultural Society at Chicago, the National Society of Agriculture, already mentioned, the Agricultural Society at La Porte, Indiana, the National Convention of Farmers, Gardeners, and Silk Culturists, at New York City, the New York State Agricultural Society, the state legislature at Richmond, Virginia, and Franklin College in Tennessee, were among the organizations which obtained information and entertainment from his lectures.

An *Almanac* sponsored by A. B. Allen & Company in 1850 was compiled by "Uncle Solon." A northern edition of this pamphlet, intended for farmers, and a southern edition, designed for planters, were published separately in New York in 1851.[2]

The desire to foster agricultural education was a driving force throughout Solon Robinson's career. He urged

[1] The Albany, New York, *Cultivator*, the *Franklin Farmer* and *Kentucky Farmer* of Frankfort and Lexington, the Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*, Nashville *Agriculturist*, Boston *New England Farmer*, Rochester *New Genesee Farmer*, and Petersburg, Virginia, *Farmers' Register*, are some of the agricultural periodicals in which the movement was discussed by Robinson and other agricultural writers.

[2] *American Agriculturist*, 9:261 (August, 1850).

the formation of agricultural societies and attendance at their meetings and fairs, the preparation of elementary books on farming and their adoption in rural schools, the establishment of a national agricultural college, and the reading of agricultural books and journals by the general farming public.

No better evidence of Robinson's vision and progressive spirit can be found than his strong advocacy of scientific practices which are truisms in our own day, but were daring and novel to the majority of farmers of his time. Ditching and draining of wet land; planting of grasses and terracing to prevent erosion of the soil; use of fertilizers such as lime, guano, marl, swamp muck, and animal manure; deep plowing; farm accounting; improvement of the breeds of livestock; development of superior varieties of seed through plant selection; adoption of new agricultural implements and machines; cultivation of trees, shrubs, and flowers; importance of balanced diet on human health; need for adequate ventilation in farm dwellings; better rural architecture; protection of animals from the weather; diversification of crops; keeping of weather records; proper feeding of animals; extension of railroads as an aid to agriculture; improvement of fruit trees; and other ideas of similar character, at one time or another were all discussed and recommended for adoption.

Some of his articles aroused heated dispute among his readers, and brought forth communication after communication supporting his ideas or strenuously denouncing them. The advisability of forming, immediately, a national agricultural society, a proposal of undoubted interest throughout the country; the question of fencing, which vitally concerned settlers upon the prairie lands of the Middle West where lumber was scarce or unobtainable (as a corollary, determination of which tree or shrub was best adapted for hedges); and the benefits of employing guano as a fertilizer, were some of the controversial subjects. One of the bitterest, and at the same

time most amusing, flurries among his readers resulted from an unfavorable account of the town of Woodburn, Macoupin County, Illinois, which appeared in one of his travel articles. The indignant citizens of that town pursued him for months with tart replies vigorously refuting his statements. In vain the editor of the *Prairie Farmer,* in which the offending article appeared, sought to pour oil on troubled waters; at last the argument died of its own weight.

Solon sometimes varied his farm writings by dwelling on other topics; for example, he called attention to a new method of printing invented by Josiah Warren; passed judgment upon United States postal regulations, and advocated a flat rate for postage; criticised the penitentiary system in Tennessee; and stated his opinion that the state debt in Indiana would never be paid. The latter two contributions hurt the pride of the citizens of Tennessee and Indiana and in reply they informed him in no uncertain terms of the error of his views.

Robinson's travel articles to and including those written in 1851 have been reproduced so fully that it is unnecessary to offer more than general comment concerning them. Between 1841 and 1851 he made six major journeys and a number of lesser extent, during which he visited almost every state then in the Union and portions of Canada. Devoting his attention chiefly to rural districts, he presents a contemporary picture of rural America as seen by a shrewd and discerning commentator. We perceive the farming of the day, both North and South, in every aspect, ranging from methods reminiscent of Colonial times to those which would be a credit to our own era. Unlike most other travelers, Robinson customarily furnished names of individuals, places, and dates, a circumstance which adds infinitely more to our knowledge than a merely general or regional description. His itinerary was noted in current periodicals, with the result that his articles were eagerly awaited and read by thousands of farmers. So voluminous was

the correspondence which came to Solon at these times, that he was physically unable to answer more than a minor portion of the letters addressed to him. Invitations to visit farmers and planters kept editors busy explaining the impossibility of satisfying all those who wished to see him. Notwithstanding the fact that there were many localities which Robinson did not visit, probably no man of his time, particularly in the period from 1840 to 1860, had a wider and more accurate knowledge of the agriculture of the United States. Taken as a whole, his acute observations form a record of great value for the social and economic historian.

In 1845, while acting as traveling correspondent of the *Cultivator,* Robinson took subscriptions for that periodical and for current books on farming.[1] Between 1849 and 1850, when he was sending reports of his journeys chiefly to the *American Agriculturist,* he took orders for that magazine and for books on agricultural subjects published by C. M. Saxton, and also sold seeds, nursery stock, farm implements, and machinery for A. B. Allen & Company.[2] Guano, which was then being imported regularly by this firm, was added to his list in 1851.[3] Close association with the Allen brothers in this period resulted in his appointment as assistant editor of the *American Agriculturist* in 1851, and although traveling much of the time he served in that capacity during the ensuing year.

Because of the increase of their manufacturing business, in 1851 A. B. and R. L. Allen concluded to suspend publication of the *American Agriculturist* after the December number and devote all their time to A. B. Allen & Company. After due consideration, and with the approval and coöperation of the Allens, Robinson deter-

[1] Robinson Account Book, 1840-1853; *Cultivator,* n.s. 2:92 (March, 1845).

[2] *American Agriculturist,* 8:333 (November, 1849); *American Farmer,* 3d series, 5:170 (November, 1849); Robinson business card of 1851.

[3] *Southern Cultivator,* Augusta, Georgia, 9:70-71 (March, 1851).

mined to enter the editorial field on his own account.

Accordingly, the *American Agriculturist* in the fall of 1851 announced that it would be succeeded by *The Plow, A Monthly Planters' and Farmers' Journal* edited by Solon Robinson, with offices at A. B. Allen & Company, and with C. M. Saxton as publisher. It was offered at fifty cents a year for twelve issues, in the belief that a reduction in price (the *American Agriculturist* sold at a dollar a year) would promote a sufficiently large circulation to more than cover the cost of the enterprise.[1]

The first number of *The Plow*, with the subtitle changed to *A Monthly Chronicle of Rural Affairs*, appeared in January, 1852. A major portion of the text for each issue was furnished by Robinson. Like many another, he soon discovered that he could work far better for others than for himself, and despite the high hopes and ambitions with which he entered upon this project, financial difficulties made it necessary to discontinue *The Plow* at the end of the year.[2] Solon's belief that a low-priced magazine would attract numerous subscribers was borne out by experiment, but the expense of publication proved too great for even the extended circulation, and *The Plow* in its brief career failed to become self-sustaining.

In content, *The Plow* compared favorably with its contemporaries and was worth far more than the price asked. Robinson associated with himself as regular contributors John P. Norton, professor of Agricultural Chemistry at Yale, Dr. Antisell, chemist and geologist, A. B. and R. L. Allen, former editors of the *American Agriculturist*, and Lewis F. Allen, agricultural writer, practical farmer, and stock breeder. He relied, also, upon his large circle of agricultural friends for contributions, but while many responded, his appeal did not call forth all the communications for which he had hoped.

[1] *American Agriculturist*, 10:297 (October, 1851). The notice was repeated in November and December.

[2] *The Plow*, 1:357, 361 (November, December, 1852).

Convinced by the financial failure of *The Plow* that frequency of appearance, not price, was the more important consideration, the Allens and Robinson now conceived a plan to publish a weekly newspaper called *The New-York Agricultor*, A. B. Allen & Company acting as publisher and Robinson as editor. The formal notice of this project given in the November issue of *The Plow* indicates its ambitious character:

"THE NEW-YORK AGRICULTOR.

A Weekly Journal, in Large Newspaper Form.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMERCIAL as well as PRACTICAL FARMER and PLANTER, the STOCK BREEDER, the RURAL ARCHITECT, the FRUIT and ARBORICULTURIST, the MARKET and KITCHEN GARDENER, and the FLORIST; together with a complete summary of the most important Foreign and Domestic News.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

TERMS—*Payable in Advance.*

One Copy.....$2 per annum....."

Wishing to retain the advantages of a monthly journal, A. B. Allen & Company proposed to publish at the same time *The Farm and Garden*.[1] The content was to be made up principally of selections from the pages of the weekly *New-York Agricultor*, and was to be edited by Solon Robinson and sold at one dollar.

The plan possessed merit but required so much capital that in the early part of 1853 the *New-York Agricultor*, like *The Plow*, became a thing of the past. At this juncture Horace Greeley offered Robinson the position of agricultural editor on the *New-York Tribune*, and his acceptance began a mutually advantageous connection which lasted until his death in 1880.

Robinson's decision to publish *The Plow* and his subsequent association with the *New-York Tribune* necessi-

[1] See *The Plow*, November, 1852, p. 329; December, 361.

tated a residence in New York. This situation had an immediate and lasting effect upon his domestic affairs, for when he announced his intention of moving to New York, Mrs. Robinson refused to accompany him. She urged that she had made a home for him at Rock Creek Ford, at Madison, and, finally, at Crown Point, and did not wish to undertake the establishment of a new home. The responsibility of bringing up the children had fallen chiefly upon her because of her husband's long absences on agricultural tours; she had many friends at Crown Point, and objected to leaving a community where she was well and favorably known to begin life anew in a large city like New York, where she knew no one. Since she was then fifty-three years of age and had undergone the privations of frontier life, her position is understandable.

Robinson, on the other hand, pointed out that the rigorous winters of Crown Point were a detriment to his health, which was none too good at best, that the community no longer offered scope for his talents, and that only by living in New York could he take advantage of the opportunity to become an agricultural editor on his own behalf, a project which, if successful, might mean a fortune for all of them. Mariah would not yield, and Robinson, faced with a choice between abandoning an editorial career or going on with it at the cost of separating from his wife, reluctantly chose the latter. From the viewpoint of his capacity for service to agriculture at large, there is no question but that he made a wise decision, but from the standpoint of human relations, the verdict is not so clear.

By arrangement Mrs. Robinson kept the children with her, and on October 20, 1852, her husband made out a trust agreement assigning to her all his lands and property in Lake and La Porte counties.[1] In addition to this

[1] Solon Robinson, trust agreement with Mariah Robinson and David Turner, October 20, 1852; Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 281.



MARIAH ROBINSON
[From a photograph probably made about 1870]

settlement, he continued to give financial support to his family. It is a tribute to the urbanity of spirit of these two people that they continued to be friends.

In 1871 Mariah Robinson was persuaded to bring divorce proceedings against her husband. According to one of her granddaughters, this action was taken simply to clarify the status of certain property.[1] Not long after this, on February 28, 1872, Mariah Robinson died at Crown Point.

Enforced separation from his family following his removal to New York in 1852, did not prevent cordial relations between Robinson and his children; in fact, as the years elapsed, his friendly feeling toward them increased rather than otherwise.[2]

Solon and Mariah Robinson had five children—Solon Oscar, born in 1831; Josephine Salinda, 1833; Charles Tracy, 1836; Leila Gertrude, 1838; and Allen Downing, 1842.[3] Allen Downing died during a scarlet fever epidemic in 1843.[4] Solon Oscar, who married Sarah J. Evans, died at Crown Point in 1858, and left no children. Charles Tracy died unmarried in New York City, in 1861. Josephine Salinda, who married in turn Janna S. Holton, Charles G. McDuffie, and George F. Strait, and left descendants by each marriage, died in 1910.[5] Leila Gertrude, who married F. S. Bedell, later became a prominent physician of Chicago. She died in 1914 without issue.[6]

Robinson's life in New York City from 1852 to 1868 was devoted chiefly to writing. A series of short stories

[1] Statement of Mrs. J. J. Wheeler, Crown Point, April 8, 1929; Knotts, "Solon Robinson."

[2] Letters: to Leila Robinson, October 16, 1857; to Charles T. Robinson, April 4, 1859; to Josephine S. McDuffie, July 25, 1860; verses, 1868-1879. Mss. in private possession.

[3] *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:182-83; Ball, *Lake County, 1884*, 402-3.

[4] *Prairie Farmer*, 3:118 (May, 1843).

[5] Statements of Mrs. J. J. Wheeler and Mrs. Cora Lincoln, of Crown Point, September, 1935.

[6] *Ibid.*; Ball, *op. cit.*, 402; A. O. Luther Scrapbook.

which appeared in the *Tribune* in 1853 were published in 1854 in book form under the comprehensive title, *Hot Corn: Life Scenes in New York Illustrated. Including The Story of Little Katy, Madalina, The Rag-Picker's Daughter, Wild Maggie, &c. with original designs, engraved by N. Orr.* This pathetic account of slum life in a large urban center aroused such public interest that over fifty thousand copies were sold within six months after it came from the press.[1]

His work as secretary of the American Widows' Relief Association, a local organization, was responsible for a treatise on *The Economy of Food or What shall we Eat, Being Useful Lessons for Rich and Poor including the Story of One Dime a Day.* Popular edict soon shortened this title to "A Dime a Day," the name by which the work is usually known. It appeared first in the *Tribune* and in 1856 was reprinted in pamphlet form.

In 1867 Robinson also reprinted from the *Tribune* his well-known novel called *Me-won-i-toc. A Tale of Frontier Life and Indian Character; exhibiting Traditions, Superstitions, and Character of a Race that is passing away.*[2] This story, a revised and expanded version of "The Will," first published in 1841, was written in the Cooper tradition and is a good example of that type of novel. The content is of even greater interest than that of the earlier tale, and the style shows a distinct improvement in literary craftsmanship.

Economic planning for individuals, particularly those who lived in cities, continued to interest Robinson, and in 1873 he wrote *How to Live: Saving and Wasting, or, Domestic Economy Illustrated. . . .* The original story of *One Dime a Day* was reprinted in this book. While in New York he is said to have published a narrative called

[1] Derby, James C., *Fifty Years among Authors, Books and Publishers*, 130-31 (New York, 1884); "Solon Robinson," in Bungay, George Washington, *Off-Hand Takings; or Crayon Sketches of the Noticeable Men of our Age* (New York, 1854).

[2] *Me-won-i-toc* ran as a serial in the *Valparaiso Messenger*, 1878-1879.

the *Green Mountain Girls,* no copy of which has been found.[1]

Two works of importance on agriculture were forthcoming during Robinson's residence in New York: a pamphlet entitled *Guano, A Treatise of Practical Information for Farmers,* published in 1853, and *Facts for Farmers,* written in 1863 and published in 1864, a book of encyclopedic character numbering over a thousand pages. The information it contained represented an accumulation of data gathered by Robinson over a period of twenty years, and was based upon his personal experiences and observation of the operations of leading farmers and planters throughout the country, covering practically every phase of American agriculture. Over five hundred agriculturists were quoted as authority for the accuracy of his statements. This book was more than an enduring monument to Robinson's industry; it proved to be a reference work so much in demand by agriculturists of his day as to warrant a translation into the German.[2] *Hot Corn, One Dime a Day, Me-won-i-toc,* and *Facts for Farmers* passed through several editions—a tribute to their popularity and value. Solon is said to have used the nom de plume "Blythe Whyte, Jr." but nothing has been found under that signature.[3]

The number of Solon Robinson's agricultural writings in the *New-York Tribune,* many of which were not signed, are so numerous that only a few can be noted. The titles "Failure of the Peach Crop," "Perils of Prairie in Winter," "Cotton Gin and Presses," "Sugar Cane," "Rice Culture," "Orange Growing in Florida," "Production of Turpentine," "Home Grown Tea and Coffee," "Tar Making and Felling Trees," "Oaks, Cypress and

[1] Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872,* 282.

[2] *Thatsachen für Landwirthe sowie für den Familienkreis . . .* (New York, A. J. Johnson; Cleveland, O. F. G. and A. C. Rowe, 1868).

[3] Wingate, Charles F. (ed.), *Views and Interviews on Journalism,* 363 (New York, 1875).

Palmettos," and "Mountain Fruit Farm," offer some indication of their scope and variety.

On occasion he voiced his views on other subjects, for example, "The New York State Agricultural Society Museum," "Southern Poverty," "Gold Mining in Georgia," "State Legislation: A Remedy for Present Defects," and "The Political Situation South."

Tiring of urban life, Solon removed in 1859 to a small farm of eight acres in Westchester County, some fourteen miles distant from New York City. Here he engaged in experimental farming, using information gained from his experiences as a basis for articles in the *Tribune*.

Robinson frequently shared in the activities of the Farmers' Club held each year in connection with the annual fair of the New York State Agricultural Society, and enlivened their gatherings by discussing "Guano vs. Barnyard Manure," "Improving Poor Land," "Experiments at the Westchester Farm," "Sheep," "Shorthorn Cattle," "What Kind of Grapes Shall I Plant," "Draining," "Fence and Cattle Law of New York," "Fertilizers," "Timothy for Cattle," "Cutting Hay," and "Florida Products." He also participated frequently in the deliberations of the New York Farmers' Club, a branch of the American Institute of New York City, where he spoke on similar topics.

As in the earlier part of his career, Robinson was often called upon to address farm organizations. Two speeches of interest were delivered, one before the joint Hampshire, Franklin, and Greene County Agricultural Society, of Massachusetts, in 1856, and one before the Greene County Agricultural Society, of New York, in 1868.

Solon's arduous duties on the staff of the *Tribune* precluded long-drawn-out journeys such as he had made before 1853. Attendance at numerous agricultural society fairs was a necessity, and he found time to make occa-

sional trips in the East and South. Florida especially pleased him because of its mild climate.

Intimate contacts with the agriculture of the South between 1841 and 1860 gave him ample opportunity to view the institution of slavery at first hand. His articles on the operation of southern plantations, for the most part, refrain from the discussion of slavery in its controversial aspects—this topic was taboo with agricultural editors —but he was frequently asked to express his opinions concerning it. In the summer of 1849 he prepared one of the most thorough dissertations on the subject which had been written up to that time. This elaborate essay was subsequently published in the September and November, 1849, issues of De Bow's *Review*,[1] with editorial comment by De Bow, the eminent southern economist and publicist. Robinson did not believe in the theory of slavery, but his views at this time were favorable to the actual working of the institution as he had observed it. He held that the negro was unable to function in a civilized country without supervision, and that his lot under slavery was far better than that of the lower classes of Europe, especially in England. Subsequently, as differences between North and South grew more and more sharply defined in the late fifties, and possibly influenced by close association with Horace Greeley, Robinson became more critical of slavery. During the war between the states he sided with the North, but took no active part in the struggle. He agreed with, and supported, Greeley in his endeavors to bring about the end of the war by peace negotiations. During the Reconstruction Period, Solon became more than ever convinced of the hard lot of the negro in an alien land, and his humanitarian tendencies caused him to sympathize strongly with the efforts of the colored people to readjust themselves to changed conditions.[2] In some quarters his

[1] *The Commercial Review of the South and West*, 1849, pp. 206-25, 379-89, hereafter cited as *De Bow's Review*. This essay will be reprinted in volume 2 of this publication.

[2] *Charleston Republican*, April 8, 1867.

outspoken views on this subject were disliked, but it was not his habit to suppress his convictions.[1]

In 1868, increasingly poor health induced Robinson to resign from his position as agricultural editor of the *New-York Tribune*. Remembering pleasant days spent in Florida, he chose Jacksonville as his place of retirement. After fifteen years of association with the *Tribune*, he was unwilling to cut himself off entirely from the paper, and continued to send contributions until shortly before his death. The assertion has been made, and very possibly with truth, that much of the prestige, circulation, and popularity acquired by the *New-York Tribune*, particularly in the West and South, was due to Solon Robinson's connection and contributions.[2]

The last years of Robinson's life were spent for the most part in his home at Jacksonville, where he occupied his time with writing, a little speaking, and occasional visits to relatives. Frequently articles were contributed

[1] "The Political Situation South," *New-York Tribune*, October 30, 1880. Susan Bradford Eppes, in *Through Some Eventful Years*, 30-41 (Macon, Georgia, 1926), presents a scathing denunciation of Solon Robinson for abolitionist activities, asserting that in the year 1850 he visited the Bradford and neighboring plantations near Tallahassee, Florida, and under the guise of a guest attempted to incite slaves to run away. Mrs. Eppes' story, written from memory by one advanced in years, is not to be taken seriously; she has declined to answer letters asking for substantiation of her remarks, and independent investigation has failed to reveal corroborative evidence. Evidently she has confused Robinson with someone else, for his character is alien to such an action, and his writings on this subject are in direct contradiction to her statements. In a letter of March 23, 1851, written at Lexington, Georgia, to Mariah Robinson at Crown Point, Indiana, Robinson says, "I am more and more satisfied with the institution of slavery as one of the best for the negro race that could be devised, but I am fully satisfied that the opposition to it will dissolve the Union. No country was ever cursed with worse enemies than the abolitionists."

[2] *Robinson Genealogy*, 1:182-83; Ingersoll, Lurton D., *Life of Horace Greeley*, 130-31 (Chicago, 1873); *New-York Tribune*, November 5, 1880.

to the *Florida Republican* and the *Sun and Press,* both published at Jacksonville. Sometime during this period, he produced another novel, *Osceola, or the Last of the Seminoles.* This narrative about the famous chieftain has not been located, but is supposed to have appeared in the *Florida Republican.*[1] Robinson proved himself a good citizen of his adopted state, and consistently used his influence to support measures for its welfare.[2]

Although the composition of poetry was distinctly not the foremost of Robinson's talents, as he was probably aware, writing of verse amused him in his leisure moments, and his correspondence between 1868 and 1880 contains numerous examples of his efforts in this direction. Many of these poems were written to his children and grandchildren and show clearly his love and affection for them. As in the earlier verse, it is the subject matter, not the style, which interests the reader. Philosophical, kindly, and humorous, occasionally reminiscent of the experiences of his boyhood, they are indicative of the mellowness of his last years.[3] One poem relating to a visit to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, in 1876, is a veritable catalogue of the exhibits and his reactions to what he saw on that occasion.[4]

On June 30, 1872, Robinson married Mary Johnson, formerly his secretary in New York.[5] In August, 1876, accompanied by his wife and her crippled sister, he

[1] Knotts, "Solon Robinson."

[2] Jacksonville *Sun and Press,* November 4, 1880.

[3] Robinson wrote "To My Dear Grand Daughter, Bell Holton," May 13, 1868; "To My Grand Daughters, Christmas 1871"; "To my daughter," January 4, 1872; "Have you forgotten when etc.?" November, 1876; "A greeting to Lake county pioneers," July 25, 1879; "My Seventysixth birth day greetings to my daughter, Mrs. Josephine S. Strait, Shakopee, Minnesota," October 21, 1879.

[4] "Can you enjoy a story told in homely rhyme," December 5, 1876.

[5] Mary Johnson Robinson was born on June 18, 1834, in Montreal, daughter of Isaiah Bowen Johnson, of Canada and Vermont. *Robinson Genealogy,* 1:182-83; *Chicago Tribune,* July 9, 1872; statement of A. F. Knotts, 1921.

visited Crown Point for the first time in twenty-five years and was warmly greeted by his relatives and the populace in general. News of his arrival spread rapidly, and over three hundred residents of the county called to see the founder of Crown Point in the few days he remained there.[1]

By 1880 Robinson's hold on life had become precarious. In August of that year, however, he was able to make a visit to Parkersville, Pennsylvania, and a short tour of the southern states.[2] The presidential campaign of the fall aroused his interest, and, although his health was failing, he expressed the hope that he would live to see Garfield and Arthur elected to office. This wish was not fulfilled, for he died about three o'clock on the morning of November 3, 1880.[3] Thus came the end of a long career. Solon was buried in the old city cemetery in Jacksonville, and there he rests from his labors.[4]

Mrs. Robinson and her sister, Louise Johnson, continued to live in the Florida home.[5] Robinson's estate was divided between his second wife and his descendants by his first wife.[6] The most valuable portion of his property, although his relatives were probably not aware of this fact, was a library of some sixty thousand volumes

[1] Invitation to reception for Solon Robinson, August 21, 1876; clipping from Crown Point newspaper [August, 1876].

[2] Robinson to W. A. Clark, August 22, 1880; "The Political Situation South," *New-York Tribune*, October 30, 1880.

[3] Shortly before his death he remarked that if Garfield and Arthur were successful at the polls, he wished the nation's flag to be raised in front of his dwelling, even though he was ill. In accordance with this last request, his wife, when news of the Republican victory was assured, put up the American flag with a notice, "Solon Robinson is dead: 'being dead, he yet speaketh'." Jacksonville *Sun and Press*, November 4, 1880; *New-York Tribune*, November 5, 1880.

[4] Robinson was buried on lot 17, section 3. Statement of A. F. Knotts, 1921.

[5] Ball, *Lake County, 1884*, 403.

[6] Robinson to Josephine S. Strait, March 5, 1876; Knotts, "Solon Robinson."

of Americana, and many personal papers, representing a lifetime of careful collection. This library was given to his young grandson, Harry Robinson Strait. The boy's parents, not realizing fully the importance and value of the gift, and having no place to house it, left the collection in Florida. On May 3, 1901, the disastrous Jacksonville fire completely destroyed the home and the library.[1] In attempting to save some of her husband's possessions, Mary Robinson reëntered the building, was trapped, and burned to death.[2]

Robinson possessed an unusual appearance and personality: tall and lanky in figure, with long hair and beard, deep piercing blue eyes and overhanging brows; at one moment his burning glance carried instant conviction of the flaming spirit within; at another his eyes changed to a cool, quizzical, and humorous aspect, revealing the keen intelligence that governed that spirit. In his youth and early manhood he had red hair. Before he was thirty it turned white and this gave his presence added distinction. Those whom he met did not forget him.[3]

Solon Robinson's place in his day and time is secure. If one may evaluate him by a vivid personality and inquiring spirit; an intelligent mind; strength and weakness of character; his activities as a pioneer; comprehensive knowledge of his chosen field; vision with respect to farming improvements and generous endeavor to promote the welfare of his fellow men; his informative and entertaining writings; his wide circle of friends, both distinguished and humble; and last, and most important, the influence he wielded through the exercise of these attributes; without question he ranks as one of the significant figures in the development of the United States in the nineteenth century.

HERBERT A. KELLAR

[1] *Ibid.;* statement of Harry Robinson Strait, April 16, 1929.

[2] *Ibid.;* Knotts, "Solon Robinson."

[3] Bungay, *Off-Hand Takings,* 186-89; Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872,* 277-84; Knotts, *op. cit.*

DOCUMENTS

[Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization used in manuscript and printed sources have been retained. No attempt has been made to reproduce type fonts.]

Advertisement: Lost Wallet

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, Sep. 29, 1827[1]]

[September 28, 1827]

Yesterday

I Lost a Pocket Wallet, and all the *Cash* I had was in it. The finder, will be rewarded for his honesty, if he returns it.

Solon Robinson.

83-5.

Cin. Sept. 28, 1827.

Advertisement: Road Work

[Madison *Indiana Republican*, Mar. 17, 1831]

[March 11, 1831]

CASH CONTRACTS

FOR WORK ON THE MADISON AND INDIANAPOLIS STATE ROAD,

BETWEEN SAND CREEK AND CLIFTY

TAKE NOTICE all persons in want of Cash, that on Saturday the 2d day of April, at 12 o'clock precisely, at my house at Rock Creek Ford, Jennings county, I shall contract with the *lowest bidder*, without reserve, for the clearing out of all the timber and bushes within the original cutting of the road, which is 48 feet wide. The distance to be cleared out is 10 & a half miles, and will be offered in one or two jobs as the bidders prefer. Cash when completed, which must be by the first of August.

I will also at the same time offer the job of clearing out all the stumps in a strip of 30 feet wide of the centre of said road.

Solon Robinson, *Com'r.*

Rock Creek Ford, Jennings co.

March 11, 1831.

[1] This advertisement was repeated on October 1, 1827.

ADVERTISEMENT: TOWN OF SOLON

[Madison *Indiana Republican*, May 5, 1831]

[April 28, 1831]

ON SATURDAY.

THE 4TH DAY OF JUNE NEXT, THERE WILL BE A PUBLIC SALE OF TOWN LOTS,

In the Town of

SOLON,

LATELY laid out, at Robinson's Stand, Rock Creek Ford, Jennings Co., in a central situation between Columbus and Vernon; 34 miles from Madison and 52 from Indianapolis. The scite is a beautiful situation, on high ground, and in a very healthy part of the country, affording plenty of the purest cool water, at a depth not exceeding 20 feet.

There are fine settlements and good Mills convenient, and much excellent vacant land in the immediate vicinity —a fine stream of living water, running over a bed of lime rock, passes within a few rods of the town plat.

Sixty-four lots are surveyed, 4 rods by 8, each of which is bounded on three sides by a street 48 feet wide, or alley 10 feet wide.

The State Road, one of the greatest thoroughfares in the state, forms one of the streets, and a county road another.

Ten of the Lots, I will donate to ten of the most useful mechanical trades; the first applicants for which, who produce good recommendations, will receive titles.

Two of the lots, for a schoolhouse, and *ten per cent of all the proceeds of the others,* I will devote to the benefit of EDUCATION.

One half of the remaining lots, will positively be sold to the highest bidder, on the day above mentioned, on a credit of 12 to 18 months.

For further information, address.

SOLON ROBINSON, P. M.

Rock Creek Ford, Jennings Co. Ia.[1]

April 28, 1831. 31. tds

[1] Ia., a common abbreviation for Indiana in the thirties.



PLAT OF SOLON, INDIANA
[From original in Recorder's Office, Jennings County]

Peculiarity of Oat Crop

[Madison *Indiana Republican*, June 21, 1832]

Solon, Ia. June 17, 1832.

Messrs. Arion & Lodge:—Through your paper I wish to mention, that the curious might cogitate upon it, a great natural curiosity that seems to prevail this year, perhaps universally.

Strange and improbable as it may appear, there is on *every* leaf of the present growing crop of oats, a plain and handsome well proportioned letter B.

The fears of the superstitious are considerably excited. Some are determined that B. stands for Burn—and the approaching comet is to consumate their prophecy.[1] Others try to believe it stands for Blood—and the present sheding of the red fluid by the Indians, is sufficient proof to them, that they have hit upon the right signification.[2]

Others, judging very reasonably from present appearances of the oat crop in this vicinity, think that it stands for Blast.

Others still more reasonably think it only a curious freak of Nature.—For myself I give no opinion, but *advise* every lover of nature's curiosities to repair to the oat field, examine for themselves and form their own conclusions.

Your friend,

Solon Robinson.

[1] The *American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1832*, 24, mentioned the expected return of Encke's and Biela's comets in 1832 and of Halley's in 1835.

[2] The *Indiana Republican* carried weekly reports of the Black Hawk War. In June, 1832, Governor Noble issued a call for 150 riflemen to guard the frontiers of Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. *Ibid.*, June 14, 1832.

ADVERTISEMENT: TAVERN

[Madison *Indiana Republican*, Oct. 25, 1832]

[October 22, 1832]

A hint to Travellers,

Respectfully shewing that I,

SOLON ROBINSON,

"Pretty well known as a Landlord,"

ON the state road from Madison to Indianapolis, do still continue, (and in consequence of the person who bargained for the purchase of my stand having "backed out,") do still intend to continue to accommodate such of my friends as still intend to "put up" with the most comfortable accomodation that a "log cabin tavern" can furnish.[1]

Travellers will "now and then" find a little very good fresh Venison, and some other things, just fit to keep from starving.

My house is at Rock Creek, 34 miles from Madison, 13 from Vernon, 10 from Columbus.

My charges are *not very* low—plenty of *Cheaper* places —"by their fruits ye shall know them."

Solon, Jennings, co. Oct 22, 1832.

MADISON AUCTION ROOM.

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Nov. 21, 1833]

[November 20, 1833]

SOLON ROBINSON

HAS OPENED A HOUSE OF GENERAL AGENCY, AND COMMISSION

Auction Business

In the room lately occupied by

STAPP & SHANNON,

MULBERRY STREET,

HE has just received from Cincinnati, several extensive consignments of Furniture, Clothing, Books, Dry Goods, &c. &c., which will be sold uncommonly low,

[1] See Introduction, 8, for a description of the cabin.

at private sale—Due notice will be given in hand-bills of the first auction sale.

Among the lots of furniture, are several *splendid* Mahogony Side Boards, Secretaries, Bureaus, carved and plain Bedsteads. Also, Chairs, Settees, Matrasses, Feather Beds, Bedding, Carpets, Kitchen furniture, &c. &c.

Consignments of every description will be received and disposed of at auction, or private sale, on reasonable terms.

Madison, Ia. Nov. 20th, 1833.

Advertisement: Auctioneer, Town or Country Sales

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Nov. 28, 1833]

[November 28, 1833]

SOLON ROBINSON,

TENDERS his services as AUCTIONEER, to attend sales of property of every description, in town or country. He believes himself well qualified as a *salesman*, to give general satisfaction. Charges moderate.

N. B. Property of all kinds will be received at the Madison Auction Rooms, to sell at public or private sale.

November 28th, 1833.

Madison Auction Rooms.

Notice to Delinquents.

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Dec. 19, 1833]

IN the next week's Republican & Banner I shall publish a "Black List" of "bidders, not buyers," particularly those who have taken goods away and have not paid for them.

Solon Robinson, Auc'r.

Madison Auction Rooms

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Jan. 2, 1834]

[January 2, 1834]

OWING to continued ill heallth, the regular sales have been suspended for a short time. Any person having business with me, will find me, when not at the auction room, at my dwelling, near the corner of 2d and West streets.

Solon Robinson.

January 2, 1834.

Circulating Library

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Feb. 13, 1834]

A COLLECTION of new and popular works will be be kept to loan out on the Cincinnati terms, at the Madison Auction Rooms. Solon Robinson.

Bebruary 13. 875

Madison Auction Rooms.

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, June 5, 1834]

[June 3, 1834]

IN consequence of long sickness and continued ill health, I am obliged to discontinue my Auction business for the present,[1] but having a quantity of goods on hand, my consignors, have ordered me to

Sell them at a very great sacrifice.

I will therefore, on to-morrow, Friday morning, at 9 o'oclock, sell a great variety of valuable articles, consisting of Dry Goods, Hardware, Glassware, Cutlery, Fancy articles, &c. &c. in lots to suit dealers.

Also,—One Splendid, Twenty-one-day, French Time Piece—a lot of Dutch Madder, and a small lot of damaged coffee.

Solon Robinson, Auc'r.

June, 3d, 1834.

[1] In the *Republican and Banner* for June 12, Robinson advertised his final sale, to be held June 17, 1834.

A Friendly Hint

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, July 10, 1834]

[July 4, 1834]

The gentleman who was so far from being "Independent," as to be under the necessity before "Independence day," of stealing two old ragged shirts from the line in my yard, is "respectfully informed," that after he has done celebrating his "glorious independence" in his borrowed shirts, if he will return them, I will give him cloth enough to make him two good substantial new ones —provided he will agree to "steal no more."

Solon Robinson.

Madison, July 4th, 1834.

Description of Northwestern Indiana

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Jan. 15, 1835[1]]

Robinson's Prairie, Oakland Co., Ia.
Dec. 16th, 1834.

Messrs. Lodge & Patrick:—I avail myself of the pleasure and take the privilege of addressing you and through you some information not only of myself, but of the country, that I hope will be interesting to my friends and acquaintances and many of your readers.

Your first inquiry will be "where is the place you date from." It is the territory which forms the North West corner of Indiana—lying west of Laporte county and between the Kankakee river and Lake Michigan. Being one of the first settlers, I have named it "Oakland county," as descriptive of most of the timber in it.[2] This Prairie having no other name, and I having moved the first white family on to it, has been called "Robinson's Prairie" by way of distinction. My location is 35 miles South West of Michigan city on the Old Sioux Indian

[1] Reprinted in *Indiana Magazine of History*, 4:66-70, and in *Gary Evening Post*, August 27, 1918, with comments by A. F. Knotts.

[2] The region was officially named Lake County in 1836.

U. OF ILL. LIB.

trail,[1] leading in the direction of Peoria, Illinois; and about the same distance South East of Chicago,[2] and on the dividing ridge between the waters of the Lakes and Mississippi. I cannot give you an adequate idea of this country. To say it is rich and beautiful, is not sufficient. It is the *first* fine country I ever saw. I am now speaking of the north part of the state generally. You have heard the Door Prairie[3] described. Description gives you no idea of the real splendor of the green when it first breaks upon the view. I had seen many Prairies before; but never such an one. My intention when I left Madison, was to have settled upon it. Knowing that it was only 2 or 3 years since it began to settle, I expected to find much vacant land. Instead of that it is nearly all claimed and already wears the appearance of an old settled country. Good frame houses and barns built and building, with such a multitude of stacks of hay and grain, that it looks like the great store house of the world. And yet with all this abundance, grain is already becoming high and scarce. The influx of "new comers" is beyond calculation. Land is rising in value most wonderfully, and yet when compared with some other countries it never can reach a value sufficiently high to compare with its real worth.

"Congress Improvements" are frequently sold on the Door Prairie from $500 to $2000 for quarter sections. Every emigrant's desire is to get upon the most valuable location he can find, so that his improvement will rise in value before the land comes into market, which will not be until next summer or later. Not finding a situation in Laporte county that suited me, I was at some loss what to do, when I accidentally met with the surveyors, just returned from their survey in this territory. They

[1] The Sauk Indian trail leading from Detroit, Michigan, to Peoria, Illinois.

[2] Fifty miles would be more nearly correct.

[3] Located in La Porte County and famous for its beauty and rich soil.

informed me that there was a large tract of country entirely unsettled, which was not only equally as fertile as the Door Prairie, but in other respects better. I immediately procured an Indian poney, furnished myself with provision and a blanket, took notes and a plat of the country from the surveyors, and in company with one other person started out on an exploring tour. I soon found the spots pointed out as first rate on my plat, and upon one of them made my pitch—returned to Laporte and procured hands to help build a cabin and moved my family on directly some fifteen or twenty miles beyond "the last house," and in one week after we camped upon this spot, I had a comfortable log cabin 18 feet square as well finished off as could be expected thirty-five miles from a saw mill. I came on to this Prairie the 1st of November, at which time I could have said with the poet of Juan Fernandes,

> "I am monarch of all I survey,
> My right there is none to dispute,"

but now, there is about a dozen houses in sight, and numerous claims made for others, though as yet I have but one white neighbor within ten miles. This is an arm of the "Grand Prairie," and is most beautifully interspersed with groves of timber, which consist of white, black, yellow, red and bur oak, and great quantities of shell bark hickory and some other timber. Lakes, streams and springs are also plenty. In the grove where I have built there is an abundance of crab-apple, plum and cherry trees—and above all, there are great number of "Honey trees" in the country. The soil on this Prairie, is composed of twelve to eighteen inches of dry black vegetable matter on top, then from one to two feet loose clayey loam, under which is a hard pan of limestone pebbly clay. Stone is not plenty, though enough for the most necessary purposes can be obtained easily. Soft timber is scarce—rail and other timber abundant and excellent, and fuel the best I ever saw—particularly oak,

which when perfectly green, will ignite as easy and burn as well as I ever saw seasoned hickory of sugar tree do in the south part of this state. As to the healthiness of the country I can only say that every body says it is so, and every body's personal appearance warrants the belief that the say so is true. The badness of my own health was my inducement for leaving the Ohio river, as then there seemed no prospect of my ever recovering it—here, I have become as hearty as I ever was in my life—completely restored. I most earnestly wish that many of my friends could partake of the benefits of this country. The north end of Indiana will most certainly become the garden spot of the state. A very erroneous impression has been long impressed upon the public in regard to the country purchased of the Potawatamies in 1832, lying within this state. It has ever been represented upon the map of the state as one immense swamp—But instead of that being the fact, it is directly the contrary. Ten thousand acres of fine high dry Prairie, to one of swamp, is more correct. Nearly all the streams are bordered with marsh, on which grows the most luxurient crop of grass, which affords the greatest abundance of good hay to the new settlers. So that instead of being a detriment to the settlement of the country, it is the greatest advantage —and as the water of these marshes is generally pure spring water and no decaying timber on them they are in no way unhealthy. In fact there is no decaying timber here (the great source of miasma) even in the timbered land. It is all burnt up annually, as the Indians make it a point to fire the Phairies every fall, and all of the timber here is so combustible that it burns so entirely as to leave no trace even of the stumps.—*Perhaps* this is the way that the Prairies are first made.

There appears to be but few Indians now in the country. There are three wigwams on the bank of a most beautiful lake[1] abounding in fish, geese, ducks and musk-

[1] Probably Cedar Lake.

rats, about four miles from my house. The wigwams are built of sticks, and covered with long grass and flag matting, and are about ten or twelve feet in diamiter, with a *small* fire, and a *great* smoke in the centre, around which the family sit or lie, on a few skins or blankets.

Superfluity of furniture, is not a sin which they are guilty of. It would be well for many of your readers who think they have not enough, to look into an Indian wigwam, and see the fact demonstrated, that,

"Man wants but *little* here below, &c.

And yet these are a cheerful happy people. Their dress usually consits of moccasins, broadcloth or buckskin leggins, a kind of kilt, and sometimes a shirt, and over all a blanket loosely thrown. They are frequently at my house to "swap" Suc-se-we-oss [Venison] for Buck-we-an and Quass-gun, [flour and bread] or Po-ke-min [Cranberries] and Musquas skins, for Sum-ma [Tobacco] and Daw-mien [corn.] They are quiet and civil, but not quite so neat as might be. Their besetting sin is a love of whiskey—an awful curse that white men have inflicted upon them. I blush to say that there are men in Indiana that will strip an Indian of his last blanket for whiskey. They are fast falling before the sweeping pestilence of drunkenness. One of the coldest nights of this winter, one of the poor wretches lay out upon this Prairie, having pawned his best blanket for whiskey enough to murder him. I am certain this is one crime I never shall be guilty of.

I take pride in being the Indian's friend. I have already acquired among them the name of "Wyonett Tshmokeman," the english of which I will explain to you when you come to see me.

Some person who would like to emigrite to the Potawatamie country, are deterred from it by fear of the Indians. Such if once here would soon dismiss their fears. They are by no means unpleasant neighbors—besides it is probable that they will all leave the country

in the course of next summer, for their new home west of the Mississippi. Others are deterred from emigrating in consequence of the land not yet being in market. No difficulty is to be apprehended from making improvements before purchasing. Congress provided for all of the settlers of 1833, at the last session, by a removal of the pre-emption law. No doubt the same favor will be extended to those who have settled since that time, at the present session of congress. If not, the claims of settlers are most singularly respected by common custom. For instance a person comes here and looks out a piece of land that suits him, he will perhaps lay the foundation of a cabin is [as?] "claimed" or located, and no person will interfere or presume to settle upon it without first purchasing the first claimant's right. There is a vast body of most beautiful country yet unclaimed in this purchase. Thousands of "first rate chances" may yet be had on this Prairie and in the groves adjoining. I have no doubt but that the rush of emigrants into "Oakland county," will be as great for three years to come, as it has been into Laporte county for three pears past. The growth of this country is, to an eastern or southern man, most wonderful. The majority of the inhabitants are Yankees; and those too who are not only comfortable, but "well to live." One good evidence of the good quality of the inhabitants is to be seen in the numerous school houses and the scarcity of grog shops. There is a great demand for mechanics. The communication with New York by the Lakes is so easy, that merchandize is not high, but labor and provisions of all kinds are quite so, when compared with prevailing prices on the Ohio river.

Michigan city, which is the only landing place at present on Lake Michigan in this state, presents one of the most singularly rapid growths I ever knew. It is now, in reality a small city—one year ago it contained only three log cabins. There is much fine white pine timber near the city, and Trail croek affords good mill privileges, on which are several mills.

Although this is a very level country, there are an abundance of mill privileges, on never failing streams, which possess the singular feature of never rising or falling, except a mere trifle.

If you think my present sketch may be interesting to your readers, I will probably give you a continuation of it hereafter.—Till then I remain

Yours &c.

SOLON ROBINSON.

DESCRIPTION OF NORTHWESTERN INDIANA, CONTINUED

[Madison *Republican and Banner*, Apr. 30, 1835[1]]

ROBINSON'S PRAIRIE, N. W. part of Ind.
February 25, 1835

MESSRS. EDITORS:

Your paper of Jan. 15, containing my former letter, has been some time received. I should have complied with your polite request for a continuance ere this, but that my "cabin" has been so constantly crowded with "land hunters," as to deprive me of an opportunity.—The present being an excessive "cold snap," has so froze up others that I have room to go ahead. Apropos, of cold; —although more North than your section of country, we do not suffer as much here as there, with cold.—It freezes harder, but the air is more dry and bracing, and less changeable. With the same clothing, a person will be more comfortable, except when crossing wide Prairies in a windy, or more particularly, snowy time. Then there is real danger.—Persons have sometimes become bewildered and lost in their course, and exposed to great suffering. Though there are but few, and probably none of the Prairies in Indiana so extensive or scarce of timber but that they will be densely settled in a short space of time. But in Illinois, they become so immense that it cannot be expected that the central portions of them

[1] Reprinted in *The Comet*, Charlestown, Indiana, May 9, 1835, and in *Gary Evening Post*, August 27, 1918, with comment by A. F. Knotts.

can ever be settled until timber has been cultivated, which no doubt could be very profitably done. Hedging will in time become a common and cheap method of fencing,—but now it is far cheaper and easier to haul rails five or six miles (which is the greatest distance necessary,) than it is to clear off heavy timbered land to make a farm.

On a Prairie, no preparation of the ground is necessary before ploughing. The first breaking requires a strong team—from three to five yoke of oxen. After that one horse will plough it, as the land is as mellow as a garden. The first, or "sod crop" is light—averaging of corn about 20 bushels—oats 30, wheat 25. An "old ground crop" will be double, and some assert threble. Potatoes, turneps, beets, melons, pumpkins, peas, onions, and almost every kind of vegetables, flourish well. The soil is too rich for fruit trees,—they outgrow themselves. I fear orchards will never do well. But we have an abundant supply of a good substitute: cranberries, plumbs, crab apples, some grapes, and plenty of wild strawberries of rich flavor,—all kinds of tame grass so far as tried appear to do well, so also of flax and hemp, and if not too far north the soil will produce the best crops of tobacco, and never become exhausted. The white mulberry has been tried, and will flourish.

The cost of breaking up and fencing Prairie, where it lies contiguous to timber, is $3 per acre, and it has been proved by actual experience, that the first crop will pay for breaking, fencing, sowing, harvesting, &c., and leave a surplus to pay for the land. The present wholesale prices of produce in Laporte county are, for wheat, 50 cts, corn 50, oats 37½; pork in the hog 3½ to 4 cts., salted 6 to 7; beans and peas $2, and scarce; potatoes scarce, and for seed only, 50 cts. to $1 per bushel.[1] At Chicago, these articles bring about double these prices, and even higher. This town is growing more rapidly than any other that I know of in the United States, and

[1] Cf. *post*, 317.



Robinson Log Cabin, 1834-1882

is certainly destined to become an important city. It is so situated, both in respect to land and water, that no point can become a successful rival. A large tract of Indiana will be as much benefited in the growth of Chicago as Illinois.

A project is now being canvassed for uniting the navigable waters of the Calimink river[1] with the Kankakee, by a canal. This is very feasible; the route from a point where there is always four feet of water in the Calimink, to the Kankakee, will not exceed 25 miles, and Cedar Lake, which is a beautiful sheet of water three miles long and one or one and a half wide, is on the very summit level. On the outlet of this lake are many very fine mill seats, and an abundance of the richest quality of 'bog' Iron ore. And what I consider as a greater curiosity than the "ancient mounds" and fortifications of the Western country, is the evident appearance of this ore having been worked, at a date corresponding with the date of all the extraordinary relics of a cultivated race of men having once inhabited the West. There is near the stream, and adjoining a bed of the Iron ore, a large bank or mound, entirely composed of *cinders*, bearing an exact resemblance to those thrown out of a modern furnace. When, or by whom, Iron was here manufactured, is a question never to be answered. Articles of earthern ware, among which are remains of Iron articles, are often ploughed up on the Door Prairie.

The Kankakee, from where the proposed canal would intersect it to near South Bend on the St. Joseph, a distance of 70 or 80 miles, is more like a lake than river, and is navigable for steam boats drawing 3 feet water at all seasons.

The Calimink is very incorrectly laid down on all maps I ever saw. The channel of the main stream runs west 30 or 40 miles, all the way navigable for steam boats, just back from the lake shore, (taking in several heavy streams from the South, the head waters of which

[1] Now known as the Calumet River.

interlock with the waters of the Kankakee,) and empties into the Lake 12 miles south east of Chicago, and 1 mile and a half west of the Indiana line. The water within the bar is 25 to 30 feet deep, but over the bar there is sometimes not over 3 feet. There is also another mouth which can easily be made navigable, about a dozen miles west of Michigan City. No doubt good harbors and towns will be made at both mouths in time, as well as at several points at the head of deep water on several of the principal streams, forming good markets for the surplus produce of the adjoining Prairies.[1]

Nearly all of the land 10 or 12 miles wide around the South end of Lake Michigan is of very poor quality, and worthless except in places where well timbered. A round Chicago it is wet Prairie; but a few feet above the level of the Lake, and the land is much like the flat beach land of the South. Forty miles west of Chicago is the "Fox river country," which is high dry Prairie, with rapid streams running over solid beds of limestone, on the banks of which are groves of good timber, though a very small supply for the great extent of open Prairie. South West of Chicago on the route of the Illinois Canal, on the Ouplane river,[2] it is also limestone country, with but little timber, but a supply of stone-coal. The junction of this river with the Kankakee forms the Illinois river. Some forty miles above the mouth of the Ouplane, on the East side and near the new and flourishing town of Juliet,[3] empties Hickory creek, which became so celebrated in the "last Indian war." It was then an extreme frontier settlement, and far detached from any other. Far different is it now.

From the mouth of the Ouplane the Kankakee is a fine rapid stream, with high banks, limestone bottom; high Prairie, but little timber, up to the Indiana line.

[1] Witness East Chicago, Indiana Harbor, Hammond, Gary, and Whiting, Indiana.

[2] Des Plaines River.

[3] Joliet, Illinois.

From thence up to near its source it has no banks; but little current; and in many places where it is 50 to 100 rods wide, and 3 to 6 feet deep, it grows entirely over with grass, so as to check its current during the summer season, and cause it to be the highest at times when all other streams are the lowest. On each side it is bordered with marsh and timber with but one or two places where the dry land comes in on both sides opposite, so as to allow a road to cross.

One of the largest tributaries of the Kankakee, is Yellow river, which comes in from the South East, crossing the Michigan road at Plymouth, forty miles north of Logansport. This is a fine mill stream—is bordered by excellent land, most of which is heavy timbered, the lumber of which in a few years will be transported by water into Lake Michigan, and also furnishing the Prairies through which a canal will pass, with building and fencing materials, and being furnished in return with lime, salt, iron, coal, &c.

The country south of the Kankakee does not compare in fertility, or facility of market with that north, yet a great portion of it will be densely settled. Some of it will be valuable on account of timber. Iroquois river, (called in the country "Rockwise," and laid down on the late maps as the "Pickamink,") which empties into the Kankakee 15 miles west of the State line, is bordered with walnut and other valuable timber east of the State line, and affords excellent mill seats and sufficient water to take the lumber to a good market—the rich Prairies below.

The whole of the Pattawattamie country, although long considered by many in the south part of the state as hardly worth purchasing, will eventually support a greater population, and add more wealth to Indiana than any other tract of the same size in any part of the State. Population, the very fountain of wealth to a new State, is flowing in here from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecti-

cut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and a few from Virginia, and other Southern States. And should Congress, previous to the land sales, take judicious steps to prevent speculators from monopolizing the land, the same wealth will continue to flow into the State till we possess a "mammoth Bank" of wealth so "monstrous" that no power of "government" can "veto" it. If the pre-emption right of purchasing the quarter section on which all settlers reside at the time the land comes into market, is granted, it will prevent non-residents from obtaining large bodies of land; a circumstance which always injures the rapid growth of a country. If this land is not offered for sale till the summer of 1836, there will probably be more actual settlers upon it, than were ever before known in any land district at the time of sale.

I know from experience and observation, that a great many persons have a very incorrect idea of the formation of a Prairie country. I will correct them:—The prevailing impression is, I believe, that it is a perfect level tract of land, destitute of timber; and that unless the soil is so loose and sandy as to render it invaluable, it consequently must be very wet. But such is not the case. Although there is level wet Prairie as well as timbered land, yet the general face of the country in this part of the State is more undulating than the heavy timbered land south of the Wabash. Not many miles from my residence, there is a tract of entire open Prairie that is really too hilly for pleasant cultivation. In the vallies run clear streams of water, over pebbly bottoms, often in channels more deep than wide, which are so overhung with the luxuriant foilage of the rich banks, as entirely to conceal the stream from view; and its presence is only known on approaching it, by the differance in the appearance of the grass. All of these streams abound in fish, corresponding in size to the size of the stream; and in some of the small lakes, (even those having neither inlet nor outlet,) they are very large.

Muskrats are also exceedingly abundant, and afford one of the principal sources of sustenance for the Indians. They eat the flesh and "swap" the skins to the traders for some of the necessaries and some of the *un*necessaries of life. It is not to be wondered at that the Indians dislike to leave a country so well adapted to their wants, and withal so pleasant to reside in. But the Chiefs of the nation seem to take the proper view of the subject.—They say their people cannot live in connection with the whites; and they are anxious, howmuchsoever they dislike to leave "their own, their native land," to see every one of their tribe remove West of the Mississippi. How long they can live there undisturbed, remains to be told. It is my opinion that the people of the next century will talk of the Indians, as "a people that are supposed to have formerly inhabited this continent." The Indians of this section of country have no fixed residence. I spoke of the kind of wigwam they live in, in a former letter. It is a mere temporary camp;—the same family occupy perhaps a dozen different shops in a year. Some have ponies; others pack all their moveable property upon their shoulders, from one camping place to another. In winter they generally select some romantically sheltered spot near a lake or stream; and in a very short space of time, a few poles, one end stuck in the ground, and the others tied together at top, covered with long marsh grass, furnish the family with as good a residence as they ever need or desire. In summer they reverse the order, camping upon the highest knobs and most airy points of groves; sometimes, though rarely, planting a "small patch" of corn. In the spring season a great portion of them engage in making sugar. Adjoining the Door Prairie on the north, is a very large body of Sugar tree timber. The Indians have many excellent Sugar Camps there. They are well furnished with large copper and brass kettles, which at the end of the season they bury until wanted again. In the Territory of Michigan, the Ottawa tribe of Indians furnish

a considerable part of the sugar necessary for consumption. This tribe yet owns all the North West part of Michigan.

Indiana has now happily got all the Pottawattamie title extinguished, with the exception of some scattering reservations belonging to individuals. It is hoped the remainder of the Miami reservation may ere long, also change owners. This tract, though not large, yet lying as it does in a fertile and central part of the State, and contiguous to the Wabash and Lake Erie Canal, renders it of the utmost importance to the interest of Indiana that the Indian title be extinguished, even at a very high price. But it is not probable they will sell during the life of the present principal Chief, who is a half breed Frenchman of intelligence—influence, and great wealth —and greater anxiety to increase that wealth, which he can better do now than if the tribe should dispose of their land.[1]

And now having given you a communication sufficiently long to cover a length of time past, and having brought the time down since my date of 25th Feb. to 25th March, I will close, and allow you to hope I may write oftener and shorter in time to come. When the Prairies become clothed with the verdant green and fragrant flowers, and the groves still more full than now of the spring birds, I will endeavor to sketch you a view of the picture. Till then, may you and your readers enjoy health and happiness, equal to that enjoyed by your friend.

SOLON ROBINSON.

[1] Treaties of November 6, 1838, and November 28, 1840, extinguished the remaining tribal holdings of the Miami in Indiana. John B. Richardville was the principal chief. See Kappler (ed.), *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties*, 2:519-24, 531-34.

Establishment of Lake C. H. Post Office

[Printed Circular, with A. L. S., Indiana State Library]

CIRCULAR ! !

LAKE COUNTY POST-OFFICE MAY 1st. 1836.

SIR

A New County, called 'LAKE', has recently been formed in the North West corner of INDIANA, which includes the "extreme South Bend of Lake Michigan;" it is 16 miles wide & about 32 long.

Near the centre of this County, 13 miles South of the Lake, 35 S. E. of Chicago, & 35 S. W. of Michigan City Ia., on a new mail route from which to Peoria Ill., the P. M. Gen'l has just established a new Post Office called "Lake C. H.", to which all communications for me, or any other person you may know to be a resident of this County, particularly of that part of it called Robinson's Prairie, you will please forward direct to this Office.

Respectfully Yours &c.

Solon Robinson. P. M.

N. B. You will also send all papers to this Office for Messrs Hammel & Henning—[1]

I send by Mr. Wells,[2] the bearer seven bundles of furs —containing each 50, except one bundle of Coon which has 29 Coon—13 Muskrat & 1 Mink which with the 7 Mink delivered makes up the bundle— The 3 bundles delivered, with them make up 500— 100 of which are

[1] This note, written at the bottom of the printed circular, indicates one phase of activity at the general store which Robinson operated at Lake Court House. Mrs. L. F. Bennett, in Centennial Notes, 1916, in Scrapbook No. 1 of the Porter County Historical Society, says that Robinson was a John Jacob Astor fur trader, an interesting statement which I have not seen elsewhere, and have not otherwise been able to confirm. The trading establishment of Jeremiah Hamell and James L. Hening was not far from the site of Valparaiso, Porter County. Hamell represented Porter and Newton counties in the General Assembly, 1837-38.

[2] Probably Henry Wells, a prominent early settler of Lake County, and associate of Robinson.

fall skins—79 Coon—8 Mink & the ballance I think first rate winter & spring Muskrat—
I have some more on hand yet to pack & a hundred or two that I shall get if I ever find time to go to the Wigwams after them—

In haste yours &c. SOLON ROBINSON

[Addressed:] Messrs. Hammel & Henning Merchants —Morgans Prairie—Porter Co—

RICHARD FANSHER ET AL: PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT

[Ms. in Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs]

[July 4, 1836]

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES—

MOST VENERABLE FATHER—

Thy children are oppressed and seek redress—Justice—simple justice—

In the fall of the year 1834 we sought for a home for our families on the public lands of our government & found one that pleased us, in the N. W. part of the state of Indiana— We have located upon section (17) seventeen in Town (34) Thirty four N. of Range (8) eight W. under the firm expectation of being permitted to purchase our homes when offered for sale by government—

After enduring the privations & difficulties incident to the settlement of a new country & making comfortable houses and improvements to the value of more than a thousand dollars we have just been shocked & had our hearts wrung at the prospect of distress exhibited to us by the grief of our wives and children, on learning for the first time that an "Indian floating reservation"[1] had been located upon our homes and "approved of by the President"—

[1] See Introduction, 12 ff., and *post*, 80 ff.

Must our hard earned homes be wrung from us by the cold blooded speculator & our families be driven forth again or will the President interfere in our behalf—

We cannot believe that if there is any law that will sanction him in the performance of so blessed an act, that Andrew Jackson will ever suffer honest citizens of this republic to be trodden under foot by such gross injustices—

We most earnestly pray that the President will take our case into consideration & cause us to be informed of our fate at as early a day as possible—

We are Proud of the glorious day & opportunity of subscribing our names as American Citizens—

LAKE CO. IA. July 4. 1836

RICHARD FANSHER
PETER STAINBROOK
LEWIS HERLITZ[1]
THOMAS CLARK
RANSOM WILLIAMS

We the undersigned, neighbors of the above petitioners do certify to the facts as set forth & most humbly join our prayer that they may if consistent with law be relieved from their present unfortunate condition—

Wm CLARK	SOLON ROBINSON—
CALVIN LILLEY	HENRY WELLS
SAMUEL HUTCHINS	ROBERT WILKINSON
SPRAGUE LEE	ELIAS MYRICK
ADONIJAH TAYLOR	JOHN KELLER
Wm MIRICK	W. W. PAYNE
JAMES KNICKERBOCKER	J. W. HOLTON
AARON COX	S. P. STRINGHAM
GEORGE HORNOR	E. J. ROBINSON
AMOS HORNOR	JOHN FOLEY
LEWIS DILLE	HENRY MYRICK
WILLIAM S. HUNT	Wm A. W. HOLTON

[1] The signature here is apparently "Lewis Herlitz," although T. H. Ball says that Herlitz did not come to Lake County until 1837 or 1838.

JOSEPH KINDER[1]	Wm A. PURDY
DAVID HORNOR	J. B. CURTIS
JOHN KNICKERBOCKER	SAM'L. D. BRYANT
HIRAM NORDYKE	JESSE BOND
RUSEL EDDY	THOMAS CHILDERS
ALXR CLARK	THOMAS WILES
AMBROS EDDY	ELIAS BRYANT

I certify that the facts set forth in the within petition are correct to my own personal knowledge—

For refferences of myself I would respectfully refer to the Hon. Senators of Indiana if in Washington—

SOLON ROBINSON, P. M. Lake Co. H.
July 4th 1836—

ORGANIZATION OF THE SQUATTERS' UNION

[Ms. in possession of Frank F. Knight, Crown Point[2]]

[July 4, 1836]

At a meeting of a majority of the citizens of Lake Co. held at the house of Solon Robinson on the 4th of July, 1836, for the purpose of adopting measures & forming a constitution for the better security of the settlers upon public lands, Wm. Clark was unanimously elected to preside over the meeting and Solon Robinson for secretary—After hearing the object stated for which the meeting was called it was moved that a committee of five be appointed to report a constitution & rules for the government of the members of this union—Whereupon Henry Wells, David Horner, Solon Robinson, Thomas Brown, and Thomas Wiles, were elected. After due deliveration they reported to the meeting the constitution hereto anexed and recorded on page 4, 5, & 6 of this book which after being read by the secretary, was afterwards discussed, examined and finally adopted

[1] The original of this signature is not clear.

[2] Printed in Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 39-48, and in Goodspeed and Blanchard (eds.), *Counties of Porter and Lake, Indiana*, 407-9.

article, by article, being fully approved by a majority of the meeting—

On motion, the meeting then proceeded to elected a Register & a board of three County Arbitrators—Solon Robinson being nominated Register,[1] & Wm. Clark, Henry Wells & S. P. Stringham being nominated Arbitrators were all unanimously elected—

After some further discussion the meeting informally adjourned—

Constitution of the Squatters Union in Lake County, Indiana—

Preamble—

Whereas, the Settlers upon the public lands in this county, not having any certain prospect of having their rights & claims secured to them by a pre-emption law of Congress, and feeling the strong present necessity of their becoming *united* in such a manner as to guard against speculation upon our rights, have met & united together to maintain and support each other, on the 4th of July 1836, and now firmly convinced of the justness of our cause, do most solemly pledge ourselves to each other by the strong ties of interest & brotherly feeling, that we will abide by the several resolutions hereto attached, (& to which we will sign our names,) in the most faithfull manner—.

Article 1st. [De]claration of rights—

Resolved, that every person who braves all of the dangers and difficulties of settling a new & unimproved country is justly entitled to the privilege heretofore extended to settlers by congress, to purchase their lands at a dollar and a quarter an acre—

[1] Robinson's leadership in the formation and activities of the Squatters' Union won him the title "King of the Squatters" and naturally led to his subsequent election to important county offices.

ARTICLE 2d Declaration of purpose— Resolved, that if congress should neglect or refuse to pass a law before the land on which we live is offered for sale, which shall secure to us our rights, we will hereafter adopt *such measures* as *may* be *necesary* effectualy to secure each other in our just claims—

ARTICLE 3d Settlers only to be aided— Resolved, that we will not aid any person to purchase his Claim at the land sale, according to this constitution unless he is at the time an actual settler upon goverment lands, and has complied with all of the requisitions of this Constitution—

ARTICLE 4th Who are members— Resolved, that all the settlers in this County, and also in the adjoining unsold lands in Porter Co. (if they are disposed to join us,) shall be considered members of this union as soon as they sign this Constitution, and entitled to all its advantages, whether present at this meeting or not—

ARTICLE 5th Officers— Resolved, that for the permanant and quiet adjustment of all differences that may arise among the settlers in regard to their claims, that there shall be elected by this meeting, a County board of Three Arbitrators, and also a Register of claims, who also shall perform the duties of clerk to the county board of arbitrators, and also the duties of a general corresponding secretary—

Elections— In all elections, the person having the highest number of votes shall be elected—

ARTICLE 6th Duties of Register— Resolved, that the person who may be elected Register, (if he accept the office) shall take an oath or affirmation, that he will faithfully perform all the duties enjoined upon him—He shall forthwith provide himself with a map of the County, (which shall be subject to the inspection of every person desiring it,) on which he shall mark all claims registered, so that it can be seen what land is claimed and what is not, and also a book in which he

What to record— shall register every claimants name and the number of the land which he claims, when it was first claimed, and

when the claimant settled upon it, and the date when registered, where the occupant was from, and any other matters deemed necesary for public information, or that the County board, may order—

Information to Strangers—

He shall give persons applying, all information in his power in regard to claims or vacant land, that shall be calculated to promote the settlement of the county— He shall also reply in the same manner to letters addressed him on the subject—[provided the applicant pays his own postage.]— He shall attend all meetings of the county board, record their proceedings and perform their orders— When required by a member, stating the object, he shall issue notice to the County or district board, when, where, and for what purpose they are to meet—

Convene board—

Fees—

For every claim he registers Twenty five cents— And he shall if required give the claimant a certificate stating the number of the land, and when registered—
For issuing notice to arbitrators to meet 12½c— For attending their meetings the same fees tha[t] are allowed them— For duties of corresponding secretary no fees shall be required—

ARTICLE 7th Duties of members—

Resolved, that it shall be the duty of every person when they sign this constitution, or as soon thereaft[er] as may be, to apply to the Register to have the land he claims, registered (paying the Register his fe[e] at the same time)— Where the claimant now resides upon the land which he claims, his claim shall be considered and held good as soon as registered— Every sale or transfer of titles, sha[ll] be registered the same as new claims—

How to claim—

Any person desirous of claiming any land now unoccupied, shall apply to have the same registered, and if he is a resident of the county at the time he applies, residing with, or upon any claim belonging to any other person or up[on] any land that has been floated upon by Indian or pre-emption claims, he shall be ent[itled] to

hold the claim he registers, while he remains a citizen of the county, provided, he sh[all] within thirty days after registering it, make or cause to be made some purminant improvem[ent] upon it, & continue to improve the same to the satisfaction of the County or district board of Arbitrator[s]

Nonresident may claim— and how

Any nonresident who may hereafter be desirous to join this Union, shall first sign this constitution, and after registering his claim, shall proceed within Thirty days to occupy it with his family, or else make a a durable and permant improvement, either by building a good cabin for his residense, or by plowing; at least four acres, and then if he is not able to continue the occupancy of his claim either personaly or by a su[b]stitute, he shall apply to the arbitrators, stating his reasons for necesary absence, whether to move on his faimily, or whether for other purposes, and they shall certify to him wha[t] amount of labor he shall perform or cause to be performed within a given length of tim[e] to entitle him to hold his claim while he is absent, or for a certain time, which when done & proved to the Register & entered of reccord, shall as fully entitle the claimant to his claim as though he resided on it— *Provided,* the board shall never grant a certificate to extend his absense one year from the date, unless the claimant has performed at least one hundred dollars worth of labor on his claim, and satisfied the board fully that h[e] will within that time become an *actual settler* upon it—

Proviso—

Members may claim for friends and How

Any member of this Union may also register and improve claims for his absent freinds, as above provided, if he can & will satisfy the board (of the county or district,) that [the] identical person for whom he makes the claim will actualy become a settler & reside u[pon] it within the specefied time—

Fraudelent Claims—

Any person found guilty by the board of making fraudelent claims for speculating purposes, shall if a member forfeit his membership in this union, and forfeit al[l] right & title to hold the same and it shall be

declared confiscated & shall be sold as provided f[or] all forfeited claims in Article 9th

Every person requiring the services of the arbitrators, shall, if required, secure to them before they are bound to act one dollar & fifty cents for each days services of each & all other necesary Expense of magistrate, Witnesses, Register or other unavoidable expense— Fees of Arbitrators—

Resolved, that each congressional Township, or any settlement comprised in two or more townships containing 20 members, may unite and elect a board of three arbitrators, who sh[all] possess the same powers to settle disputes (when applied to) within their district, that the co[unty] board have—And any member of that district may either submit his case, to the district or county board— The opposite party may object to one or two of the district board and call one or two of the county board or some disinterested member to sit in their places, provided he pays the extra expense so occasioned— All decisions of county or district board shall be final— ARTICLE 8th District Board— Jurisdiction— objections— decisions—

Either of the parties, or the district board may require the Register to attend their meetings and record their proceedings— But if he is not present they shall certify their judgment to him immediately, and he shall register it as any other claim—

Any member may also object to one of the county board, upon the same terms, and require one of a district board, or some disinterested member to sit in his place— The same proceedings shall also take place where one of the board are interested in the dispute— The district board may order district meetings, and the county board county meetings—

Resolved, that the board of arbitrators shall as soon as may be take an oath or affirmation before some magistrate, faithfully & impartialy to perform all the duties enjoined upon them, not inconsistant with law, and that they will do all acts in their power for the benefit of members of this Union— ARTICLE 9th Duties of Arbitrators— Oath—

When to meet — On being duly notified, they shall convene, and if they see proper, they shall make their acts a rule of court before some magistrate, according to the statute provided for arbitrated cases—

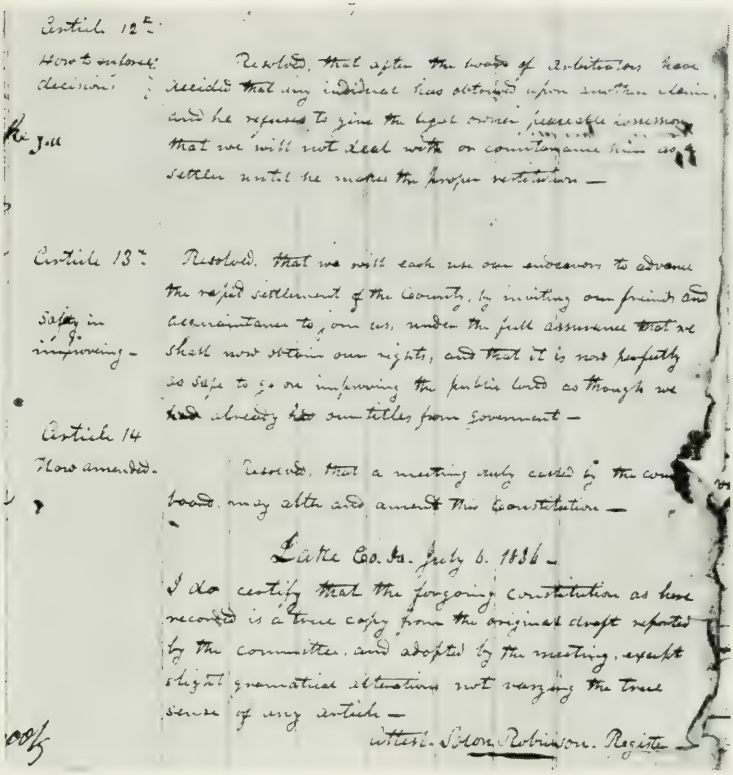
[May] require oath— [Jud]gment— — They may require the parties in the case to be tried, to be sworn, or affirmed, and hear arguments of parties or counsel, and finaly decide which party is justly entitled to hold the claim, and which party shall pay costs, or damages—

Forfeited claims— How disposed of— — It shall be the duty of the County, or district board where the claim is situated, to take possession of any claim confiscated under the provisions of Article Seven, or any unoccupied non resident claim, the claimant of which has neglected to occupy or improve the same, according to the terms, and within the time specified in the certificate, and sell the same to some other person who will become a settler on it, keeping the money obtained for it in their hands [unless hereafter a Treasurer shall be appointed] for a fund to defray any expense that may be deemed necesary to maintain our just rights or advance the interest of the Union—And if a fund so accumulated shall not be requred for such purpose, the board shall use it toward purchasing land for any needy Widows or Orphan children, or needy members of this Union—

Fund— How used—

Proviso. — Provided, that the board having jurisdiction, may extend the time to any claimant holding a certificate from them, on application through the corresponding secretary, if the claimant can give them satisfactory reasons therefor, and they may also when they have sold a forfeited claim, if they deem it just & reasonable for good cause shewn, refund to the certificate claimant, the amount he had actualy expended upon it, and retain in the fund only the overplus that the same sold for—

Conduct— — Any officer of this union, or any member, shall be discarded if convicted of gross neglect of duty, or immorral conduct tending to injure the character of the Union—



Article 12th.

How to enforce decisions

Resolved, that after the award of Arbitrators has decided that any individual has attempted upon another claim, and he refuses to give the legal owner possession immediately that we will not deal with or countenance him as a settler until he makes the proper restitution —

Article 13th.

Safety in improving —

Resolved, that we will each use our endeavors to advance the rapid settlement of the County, by inviting our friends and acquaintances to join us, under the full assurance that we shall now obtain our rights, and that it is now perfectly as safe to go on improving the public land as though we had already the our titles from government —

Article 14

How amended.

Resolved, that a meeting only called by the committee board, may alter and amend this Constitution —

Lake Co. Ia. July 6. 1836 —

I do certify that the foregoing constitution as here recorded is a true copy from the original draft reported by the committee, and adopted by the meeting, except slight grammatical alterations not varying the true sense of any article —

attest. Solon Robinson. Recorder

THE SQUATTERS' CONSTITUTION, 1836

[Detail from a page of the original manuscript, in the possession of Frank F. Knight, Crown Point]

ARTICLE 10th Claims— [W]ho may hold

How much—

Resolved, that every White person capable of transacting business, & making or causing to be made, an improvement on a claim, *with the evident design of becoming a settler thereon,* shall be entitled to be protected in holding a claim on ONE QUARTER SECTION, AND NO MORE— Except, where persons holding claims on the Prairie or open Barrens, where the board may decide they have not sufficient timber to support their farm, shall be allowed to divide one quarter section of timber between four such Prairie claims—

[C]laimant may take oath—

The board of arbitrators may require any person making a claim to take an oath or affirmation that he intends the same for actual settlement, or [if timber] use of his farm—

[T]imber claims—

No person settling in thick timber shall be allowed to hold more than Eighty acres of timber, but shall be protected in a claim of Eighty acres on the Prairie—

ARTICLE 11th Provision for land sale—

Resolved, that before land is offered for sale, that each district shall select a bidder to attend and bid off all claims, in the claimant's name, and that, if necesary, every settler will constantly attend the sale, prepared to aid each other to the full extent of our ability in obtaining every claimants land at goverment price—

ARTICLE 12th How to enforce decisions

Resolved, that after the board of arbitrators have decided that any indidual has obtruded upon anothers claim, and he refuses to give the legal owner peaceable possession, that we will not deal with, or countanance him as a settler until he makes the proper restitution—

ARTICLE 13th

Safety in improveing

Resolved, that we will each use our endeavors to advance the rapid settlement of the County, by inviting our friends and acquaintance to join us, under the full assurance that we shall now obtain our rights, and that it is now perfectly as safe to go on improving the public land as though we already had our titles from goverment—

ARTICLE 14 How amended—

Resolved, that a meeting duly called by the county board, may alter and amend this Constitution—

LAKE CO. IA. July 6, 1836—

I do certify that the forgoing constitution as here recorded is a true copy from the original draft reported by the committee, and adopted by the meeting, except slight gramatical alterations not varying the true sense of any article—

Attest—SOLON ROBINSON—*Register*[1]

NUTMEG POTATOES—LAKE SUPERIOR CORN[2]

[Albany *Cultivator*, 4:101-2; Aug., 1837]

Lake C. H. Ia. July 12, 1837.

DEAR SIR—As soon as I can possibly find leisure, I intend to send you a *description* of the several kinds of prairie, as to appearance, vegetation and cultivation. I hope to send you "prairie flower seeds."

I have (to us,) a rare kind of potatoes, called "nutmeg potatoes," which ripen in about six weeks, grow small, about the size, and as smooth as hen's eggs—very dry and rich—valuable for garden culture. Have you such? Also—Lake Superior Indian corn—which *stools* out like wheat, each branch bearing a small, short ear, of a redish yellow color. The stalks low, may be planted very close, and requires the shortest season of any other corn I ever saw to come to perfection. Perhaps it is not new to you.

[1] The signatures to the Constitution, only partially legible in the manuscript, have not been reproduced by Ball or other historians of the county. Additional names were appended as new members joined the Squatters' Union. There were at least two copies of the Constitution, for Robinson made a note of the transfer of twenty-eight signatures to the copy from which the above transcript was made.

[2] This letter was Robinson's first contribution to the Albany *Cultivator*, and the beginning of his career as an agricultural writer. The *Cultivator*, one of the best edited and most widely circulated agricultural periodicals of its day, was established at Albany, New York, in 1834. By descent and combination it continues today as *The Country Gentleman*, published at Philadelphia.

Do you know what is meant by "Burr Oak?" The shell of the acorn being fringed or *burred,* and highly prized as feed for hogs.

Yours, &c. SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

REMEDIES AND RECIPES; CIRCULATION OF CULTIVATOR

[Albany *Cultivator,* 4:132-33; Oct., 1837[2]]

Lake C H Ia August 29, 1837.

J. BUEL, Esq.[3]—DEAR SIR—I conceive it to be a duty that each patron of the Cultivator owes, as much as payment for the amount of his subscription, to communicate to you all such facts as he may deem important or beneficial to his agricultural brethren, that therefrom you may *select* such items as have not been, or that you may deem useful to publish. With this view I send you the following scraps:

DISEASES OF HORSES.

Thistelow and Poll Evil, both of which I have known effectually cured, after breaking, by crowding a lump of pearlash or salæratus into the sore. If the first application is not effectual, repeat it. The patient should be thoroughly physicked at the same time.

DYSENTERY, BLOODY FLUX, CHOLERA MORBUS, ETC.

If there is an "infallible remedy" in the world for any complaint the human system is subject to, there is one

[1] The Conductor of the *Cultivator* added the following comment: "Mr. Robinson will do us a particular service by sending us seed of the potatoes and corn, as well as of the prairie flowers. The *bur,* or *overank oak,* grows in most of the western states—is a beautiful tree, and is distinguished as having the longest leaves, often 15 inches, and largest acorns, of any species of the oak."

[2] Reprinted in part in *Franklin Farmer,* Frankfort, Kentucky, 1:61 (October 21, 1837).

[3] Jesse Buel, 1778-1839. As founder, editor, and conductor of the *Cultivator,* Albany, New York, 1834-1839, he greatly influenced contemporary thought. See *Dictionary of American Biography,* 3:238-39.

for these complaints in a very strong tea made of the bark of the Sweet Gum, the scientific name of which is "Liquid Amber." It grows a large tree, is a native of southern latitudes, grows very abundantly on the high table lands of Ohio and Indiana, has a leaf like maple, and a ball somewhat like "Button Ball," or Sycamore, exuding a very aromatic white gum. I *know* the medicine to be almost invaluable.

BOILING RICE.

I venture to say not one in ten of the readers of the Cultivator, has ever heard of a receipt for so simple a piece of cookery. There is none more important. Try it. If it is an improvement, recommend it. Put three cups of rice into two cups of cold water, set it over a brisk fire, and after it commences boiling, let it stand *eight minutes only*—'tis then ready for the table. Instead of being a mass of unwholesome salve, it will have completely absorbed the water, leaving the grains separate, soft and excellent.

LONG MANURE.

I have tried the experiment this season on my garden, with most convincing success. Having a very retentive subsoil, I tried the plan of burying coarse dry straw under my beds of beets, carrots, parsnips, peas, beans, vines, and almost every kind of vegetable that I planted, to serve as an underdrain as well as manure. The effect has fully convinced one sceptic. I hope others will try it. This is the first time I ever saw straw used for manuring any crop, except potatoes. I have toiled many a day to rot it, so as to make it "fit to use for the next crop." How much knowledge to be gained for 50 cents a year! As a means of extending such valuable knowledge I ask a consideration of

A NEW PROPOSITION,

to extend the circulation of the Cultivator, or some other agricultural paper. It is this:—

Make it an invariable rule, that every agricultural premium, should include a copy of such paper, which should be given by the person receiving the premium to some one who had never taken it—always taking it for granted that no one would ever get a premium unless he was a patron of some such paper And further, let those who are able and willing, raise a fund, say $500, for gratuitous distribution of the Cultivator, among those who are either unable or unwilling to pay, but who would be willing to read. Let every friend to the proposition subscribe such amount as he will give, as soon as it is ascertained that $500 can be raised. To begin, although I am poorly able to do it, I will subscribe $5. I hope it will not stand long alone.[1]

I am respectfully yours, &c.

SOLON ROBINSON.

BEANS AND BUCKWHEAT.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 4:147; Nov., 1837]

Lake County, Ia. 9th Oct. 1837.

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir—The following simple and easy method of saving a crop of *beans*, is worth the price of ten years' subscription to the Cultivator, to every person that never practised it, who wishes to cultivate that valuable crop. By this method, beans may be planted in a field by themselves, may be pulled while the vines are entirely green; and will be perfectly cured, no matter how wet the weather; and what is more, need not be housed or thrashed until such time as may be convenient.—This is the plan

[1] The Conductor added a short note: "Mr Robinson's subscription is registered, and we shall be glad to see his proposition sustained. Should it be so, the names of the contributors to the $500 fund will be published in the Cultivator."

TO CURE BEANS.

Take poles or stakes, (common fence stakes,) into your bean field, and set them stiff in the ground, at convenient distances apart, which experience will soon show you, and put a few sticks or stones around for a bottom, and then, as you pull an arm-full, take them to the stakes, and lay them around, *the roots always to the stake,* as high as you can reach, and tie the top course with a string or a little straw, to prevent them from being blown off, and you never will complain again, "that you cannot raise beans, because they are so troublesome to save." They are the easiest crop ever raised, to take care of. Try it, and you will then know it, and thank me for telling you of it. Your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

N. B. Buckwheat is the best grain that grows, to keep through the winter in a stack. It's all a notion that it must be thrashed as soon as dry. Stack it—try it—it will keep.

SHOBONIER CLAIM—DEPOSITION AND AFFIDAVITS

[Ms. in Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs]

[November 4, 1837]

STATE OF INDIANA
LAKE COUNTY } SS.

Before me Milo Robinson, a Justice of the Peace for the County & State aforesaid, this 4*th* day of November A. D. 1837 personaly came Solon Robinson, and under his solemn affirmation, deposes & says that he is now & has been for more than three years last past, a resident upon Section 8 in Town 34 N. of Range 8 W. in the Laporte land district—that he was the first settler upon said Section—that he was well and intimately acquainted with the said Section 8 and also Section 17 in the same Town, in the year 1834—that there was not then any "Indian Village" upon either of said Sections—that there

was no indication that there ever had been an "Indian Villiage" thereon—and the only signs that Indians had ever resided there, consisted in three small patches of ground, in all not more than one acre, that had the appearance of having been planted in corn many years before, and were now much grown up with bushes & briars—There was no enclosures no cabins or wigwams, no graves, nor any thing else to indicate that an "Indian Village had ever been thereon—That he is well acquainted with Indian customs—has often seen and knows the appearance of Indian Villages—That he is well and intimately acquainted with an Indian known by the name of Sho-bon-ier,[1] to whom two Sections of land were reserved in the treaty of Tippecanoe of the 20th of Oct. 1832, lying & being situated within the state of Illinois, more than seven miles from said Sections 8 and 17, that after he had settled upon this land and made valuable improvements thereon he was threatened by one Butler, a white man who purchased an interest in the said reservation that he would get "old Sho-bon-nier to locate his reservation upon his improvements," and that he, this deponant thereupon applied to the Agent of Indian affairs at Chicago, in Illinois and was by him informed that the said Indian was aware that his reservation was not in the State of Indiana, that he the agent had directed the surveyor employed for that purpose to survey out & report his reservation—that the Indian had been with the surveyor, but from some reason had not yet pointed out the whereabouts of his village, and as the said agent verily believes because he never had any village, or any place called one—and that the said agent encouraged this deponant to go on with his improvements on the aforesaid Section 8, and gave this dependant the papers hereto annexed by seal, by him officialy signed—

And this deponant further saith that he sufficiently understands the Indian language to converse with the

[1] See Introduction, 12 ff.

said Sho-bon-nier, that he has often been at his house & conversed upon the subject of his reservation, and that he never pretended that either of the aforesaid Sections were his reservations, or that his said "village" was on them, but always on the contrary, that it was at some other place frequently mentioning a place near the Illinois line, known in the Indian language as "Mus-qua-och-bis" (Red Cedar Lake) as the spot where he most wished to have his reservation located—And further that the said Indian is old and infirm and aparently short lived, and has emigrated to the west of the Missisippee river, and has no intention of settling upon his reservation if located—That the aforesaid Butler & one John Mann, also a white man appear to be the only persons taking or having an interest in the said reservation, and their great anxiety to locate it upon the said Section 8 arises from the fact that this deponant and others have made it valuable by their labor in making improvements thereon to the value of more than two thousand dollars

And this deponant further saith, that placing full faith in the words of the treaty aforesaid & in the information of the Indian agent, as will appear by his certificate, and by the word of the said Sho-bon-nier himself that this was not his reservation, and trusting in the magnanimity & justice of the government of the United States, this deponant & others have incurred great expense in improving farms on said Section 8, and have at their individual expense erected suitable & commodious buildings for the use of the County, (until the lands, therein shall be sold,) in which the courts are held & public business done, and that the location of the aforesaid reservation upon their said improvements, whereby they will be deprived of the right of purchaseing the land in the usual way will be an act of oppression upon humble citizens not warranted except upon the most clear principle of law & justice to the aforesaid reservee for his benifit alone—

And further this deponant saith not—

SOLON ROBINSON

Affirmed & signed
before me at the said
County this 4*th* day of
Nov. 1837—and the paper
mention above hereto annexed
in my presense—
MILO ROBINSON
Just. Peace

The reservation of Two Sections of land to Sho-bon-nier by Treaty of 20 Oct. 1832—must according to the provisions of the Treaty, be located within the limits of the tract of land ceded to the United States, by Said Treaty, and as no part of said Tract lies within the State of Indiana the location cannot consequently be made in that State

TH. J. V OWEN
———*Ind. Agt.*

STATE OF INDIANA }
LAKE COUNTY } SS.

Also personaly came before me Justice as aforesaid, Luman A. Fowler, (Sheriff of said County) who being duly sworn deposeth and saith, that he also is acquainted with all the material facts set forth in the deposition of Solon Robinson above written, regarding the appearance of their land on said Sections 8 & 17, in the year 1834, and the assertions of the said Butler, and old Sho-bon-nier and as to the improvemts made thereon &c. and from his knowledge of the deponant he verily believes the whole matter set forth to be true—And furthermore that he is not a settler upon either of the above Sections, & has no interest in any improvements thereon—

LUMAN A FOWLER

Also personaly came William Clark, (one of the Associate Judges of Said County) Thomas Wiles & Stephen T. Stringham, (County Commissioners) Henry Wells,

Hiram S. Pelton, Thomas Clark & Russel Eddy—Elisha J. Robinson.

Severaly depose upon their oaths that they are acquainted with many of the facts above set out, and that they place full faith and reliance in the truth of the above deponants declareation

In witness where of they hereunto set their hands & make oath before me at the County aforesaid this 6*th* day of Nov. 1837.

MILO ROBINSON

Just. Peace

Wm CLARK
H. S. PELTON
HENRY WELLS
RUSSELL EDDY
ELISHA J. ROBINSON
S. T. STRINGHAM
THOMAS WILES

I am acquainted with several of the Deponents whose names are opposite & know them to be intellegent & honorable men—one of them is a Judge of Lake Cir. Court—July 1838
ALBT. S. WHITE

STATE OF INDIANA
LAKE COUNTY } SS.

I Solon Robinson, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Lake County, certify that the aforesaid Milo Robinson is an acting Justice of the Peace, fully authorised to administer oaths and take depositions &c—

Witness my hand and seal as said Clerk this day of November 1837—

SOLON ROBINSON

ROBINSON FAMILY RECIPES

[Albany *Cultivator*, 4:198-99; Feb., 1838]

Lake C. H. Ia. Dec. 12*th*, 1837.

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir.—I consider your items of matter relating to household economy, as the most universally useful part of the paper. Thousands who possess the raw materials in abundance, lack "the art of making a good dinner out of small means." The follow-

ing simple recipes are valuable, in my family. If you find room for them, I hope they will prove so in many other families.

Yours truly, SOLON ROBINSON.

BUTTERMILK BREAD.

Many of your readers are not aware of the value of buttermilk, in making biscuits. Let me tell them how to use it, I am sure they will thank me.

Take a large table spoonful of sal aratus, (not pearl ash,) pulverize or dissolve the lumps, and put it into buttermilk enough to wet up a gallon of flour. Lard or butter may be added to make the biscuit *short* if required. In summer it must be baked directly, or it will sour. In cold weather the dough may be kept. The biscuit will be very light, very sweet, very palatable, very nourishing, very wholesome, and a very considerable item of economy in the consumption of an article that is too often made food for hogs, when so valuable as food for man. Bonnyklauber will answer as a substitute for buttermilk. But the latter may be put up in jars, or a butter keg, in the fall, and kept till spring, by occasionally pouring off the water that rises on the top. No matter how sour it becomes, put in sal aratus enough and it will become as sweet as fresh yeast, and answer the same or a better purpose.

While upon the subject, let me tell those who are not informed, the difference between

SAL ARATUS AND PEARL ASH.

Pearl ash is made from the lye of wood ashes; it will make soap, and by the affinity it has for water, is very likely to dissolve and waste when exposed to the air; it gives food an unpleasant soapy taste when used in excess, with lard or other greasy matter.

Sal aratus is made from pearl ash, by a process that destroys the soapy principle, and the affinity for water, so that it will keep dry as well as chalk, &c. It is also much more valuable in cooking, on account of possessing

in great excess the very principle of yeast, and produces the same effect upon bread when mixed in with acid, by which the gas that produces what the housewife calls "raising," is disengaged from the sal aratus and expands all those little cavities in a light loaf.

The process of changing the pearl ash into sal aratus is very simple. It is effected by placing the pearl ash in sacks over the mash-tubs of a grain distillery during the process of fermentation, and by the great affinity it has for the carbonic acid gas that is disengaged from the meal, it becomes not only dryer, but is so much increased in weight as to pay a profit on the operation. I wish the whole process of distillation was of as great value to the world.

As "economy *in* the house," is the active partner of "industry *out* of the house," I will add one more to your valuable list of cooking recipes. Though perhaps it is out of character for a "Hoosier" to tell a Yankee how to make

PUMPKINS PIES.

"Grease the pie plate evenly and well, and sift fine dry corn meal, about as thick as you would make a flour crust, evenly over it, and then spread the prepared pumpkin over the *meal crust,* bake in the usual way, eat it warm, or before it is many days old." Be assured that such a pie is truly good, rich, healthy, economical. It can be prepared ready for the oven (the pumpkin being previously stewed,) in five minutes, when "I wish we had a pie for dinner," is expressed. As "nothing to shorten pie crust" is required, it can be made after the "lard tub is out," and also when the good woman "wishes we had a little flour to make pies of our sweet pumpkins," and when the good man replies "my dear we can't afford it, flour is $10 a barrel." I beg of you to try it. If you do not pronounce it valuable knowledge, cheaply acquired, I never will trouble you again.

A Proposition, to Facilitate Agricultural Improvement.[1]

[Albany *Cultivator*, 5:60-61; May, 1838[2]]

Lake C. H. Ia. 4th March, 1838.

J. Buel,—Dear Sir,—What can, what must, what SHALL we do, to elevate the standing of the cultivators of the soil? There is "something rotten in Denmark," that needs ALL the energy of ALL the friends of agriculture, to eradicate from the community. A false pride pervades the land, and a false estimate is placed upon the value of that class of community, who are the very creators of, not only all wealth, but are the very basis and only foundation of all real wealth. What shall we do to bring about that happy state of society, that once pervaded the Roman empire, when he who cultivated the soil took the first rank among all trades and occupations? One of the very best things that the friends of this whole country can do, is to make the science of agriculture take that rank that shall induce merchants and professional men to seek to make *their* sons farmers, instead of that worst of all manias that now pervades the farming community, and which induces the annual ruin of thousands of young men, by seeking to be what nature never intended them for.

"Willie is so weakly we must make a doctor of him." "And John has such a *faculty* for trade, that his father intends to set him up. Besides you know, since he came home from school, he can't bear to go to work on the farm; and you know it 'ant so genteel as a merchant."

[1] With this article Robinson began his famous crusade for a National Society of Agriculture, which resulted three and a half years later in the formation of such an organization at Washington, D. C. Although this society was short lived, chiefly because of failure to obtain for agriculture the Smithsonian bequest, it set forces in motion which culminated in the establishment of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1862.

[2] Reprinted in *Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, September 18, 1838; also in part in *Franklin Farmer*, 1:305 (June 2, 1838).

These expressions and sentiments must be weeded out of every farmer's family. And he who can devise how it shall be done, how to change the public sentiment, so as to make the farmer and the farmer's wife and sons and daughters proud of being such, will be more deserving of the thanks of his country, than he who discovers how to destroy the grain-worm; for of a truth, this is a worm that is eating out the very vitals of community. It is the very cause of all the importations of wheat into the United States, and which have blotted our fair name as an industrious, agricultural nation. The commercial and professional part of society is overburthened with useless drones. The agricultural community are borne down with a consciousness that they are neglected by legislatures, and despised by the butterflies who flutter over them in British broadcloth, consuming the fruits of the sweat of their brows. And the mania that induces farmers to seek to ruin their offspring by seeking to make them *genteel,* unless soon counteracted, will do more to dissolve this Union, than high tariff and abolition united. An indolent mode of life, or a false pride, that makes a man ashamed to earn his own living with his own hands, is a fountain that will spread more seeds of corruption through the body politic, than all others.

What then shall we do? For do we can—Do we must, and let you and I say, do we will. Every thing must have a beginning. Suppose then that we begin with an endeavor to form an

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE,

The leading principle of which shall be to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil; and whose members shall be pledged to the promotion of domestic industry, and particularly the growth of American wool and silk, by wearing manufactures of such; and to the promotion of agricultural schools, and the establishment and gratuitous circulation of agricultural papers.

And now, you being agreed with me, that a great good may be accomplished by such a society, the branches of which shall extend into every county of the Union, will you take it upon yourself to effect the first organization? Will you draft a constitution and nominate some gentleman who will act as the first president? (I suggest the Hon. H. L. Ellsworth, Washington.) Make every editor of an agricultural paper, and such others as you think proper, vice-presidents. A treasurer should be appointed to receive *voluntary* contributions towards forming a fund to defray necessary expenses of printing, &c. and sending abroad agricultural publications, and printing a splendid certificate of membership, which fathers would exultingly show their children as a mark of honor. A corresponding secretary should be appointed in every county and principal town, who would be active in enlisting members, and communicating a mass of information to the principal secretary, &c. The grand object would be, to enlist such a mass of influential men in the society, that farming would become popular and fashionable, so that parents would no longer seek to get their children into a more fashionable or "more genteel employment."

A great good could also be accomplished by annual meetings of such a society. The delegates from every state, not only bringing together a vast amount of useful information, but rare and valuable seeds from every part of the Union for mutual exchange, and also curious specimens of vegetable and mineral products, which in time would form a most curious and unique cabinet of natural curiosities.

If the project is not visionary—if it can be carried into effect, do not let it rest. Your standing and influence will give a weight to the matter, that I, an individual but little known, cannot command. But my humble exertions and small means will be freely given to roll the ball ahead, when once started.

I think you can associate twenty gentlemen at least, with you in Albany, who will be willing to lend the

influence of their names and form a nucleus, around which to form this great national bond of union and usefulness.

And if nothing else can be done, you can publish this communication, with an earnest request, that every patron of the Cultivator would say to himself, something can, something must, something shall be done, to raise the character and standing of the whole agricultural community, and I will begin in my own family. I will teach my children that no other occupation is so profitable, so honorable, or so "genteel," as that of a farmer.

I do not often write so lengthy, but the manner in which you have honored my several communications, has led me to hope that I may still be useful, and I humbly hope withal, interesting to some of my agricultural friends.

I remain, most respectfully, your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 5:109; Aug., 1838]

Lake C. H. Ia. June 19, 1838.

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir—I cannot but feel a proper degree of pride to perceive what universal approbation, my proposition for an "American Society of Agriculture" meets with. Not pride for myself, because I happened to be the first to make the proposition; but pride for my country, to perceive that there is so much of the true spirit yet alive in the land. I have received several letters and papers containing notices of the proposition,

[1] The Conductor of the *Cultivator* remarked: "Mr. Robinson's proposition meets our hearty approbation; and should it be favorably responded to by our cotemporaries who conduct agricultural journals, and whose opinions upon the subject we respectfully solicit,—we shall give it our cordial support,—and devise some means, if others do not do it, to organize an association, 'TO ELEVATE THE CHARACTER AND STANDING OF THE CULTIVATORS OF THE AMERICAN SOIL'."

which indicate to my mind, that "something can be done." Organization is all that is lacking. That "must be done," and then the last affirmative in the proposition is sure to follow. For if all the friends to agricultural improvement are once united, "something WILL be done, to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil." There is a charm in the very name of "The American Society of Agriculture," which is sufficient to enlist thousands. Something so ennobling in the thought of being known to be one of the members of such a union of all the most eminent agriculturists in the whole country, moved and actuated by one impulse, and mutually interchanging their views, experiments, improvements, and newly acquired information.

What an immense influence would this have upon the whole country. Look at the influence upon mechanics of the American Institute.[1] Greater still would be the influence of such a union of agriculturists. Look at the influence of agricultural schools and pattern farms. This would be one great agricultural school upon a thousand pattern farms, the annual exhibitions from which would do wonders towards inciting others to go and do likewise.

We cannot look to legislative action, for that encouragement and protection which the agricultural interest is entitled to, until the tone of public feeling is further awakened to the importance of the subject, by the immediate action of the cultivators themselves, and until the subject can be made popular, and then it will lack no assistance.

Can any plan be devised that will have a greater tendency to create that popularity than the formation of the "American Society of Agriculture?" If so, let it be done. I enrol myself one of its friends and supporters. But the time is fully come that "something can be done," and I shall lay my grey hairs sorrowing in the grave, if the whole country does not respond, "something must,

[1] See *post*, 526 n-27 n.

something SHALL be done," and done quickly, to promote the great, and good object in view.

Yours, &c. SOLON ROBINSON.

"WHERE DID HE GET HIS EDUCATION?"

[Albany *Cultivator*, 5:124; Sep., 1838]

Lake C. H. Ia. July 15th, 1838.

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir—This question, which has so often been applied to the writer of this article, has just been brought forcibly to mind by (for the first time) reading in your first volume, an address to young men, in which occurs this golden morsel:

"Although we may be learned by the help of others, we can never be wise but by our own wisdom."[1]

That is our own exertion. There is also another article in the same volume on "Self-Education," by John Neal; which is worthy of a republication in every paper in the union.[2]

It is a settled point that some of the wisest men who have adorned our country were self-educated. Mechanics and farmers *have* "found time" to acquire a useful education. Every one of them *can* still find time for the same purpose, if he will. It is self-exertion that acquires self-education. Who that perceives that the knowledge which his neighbor possesses, and which gives him such a decided advantage in the world, is within his own reach, that will not extend his hand for the golden treasure?

What shall we do to incite young men to exert themselves to procure an education by their own exertions? For they can no longer depend upon government. Not one half of the states have even provided for the lowest grade of schools. And in those where the common school system is in the best operation, what except the veriest

[1] This axiom is quoted in a statement "To the Reader," in the *Cultivator*, March, 1834, p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, August, 1834, p. 72.

rudiments, the mere A. B. C.'s of useful knowledge, can be learned.? 'Tis true this is a good foundation, but we want something to incite the community to add those elegant superstructures which ornament the world. We should have, we can have, shall I add, we will have, in every county and principal town in the United States a well founded agricultural school, in which young men and girls can acquire such an education as will be USEFUL. Not a piano, French, Spanish or flower daub education, but one that will make the men scientific farmers and mechanics, and intelligent public officers and *acting* legislators, and the women fit to become the honored and husband-honoring wives of such citizens—who will never be ashamed to tell their daughters, that they obtained the education that has ever since rendered them ornaments to society, in a manual labor school, where, by their daily toil, they earned their daily acquirements. But let not toil be construed slavery or drudgery, for that never should be in any family, and much more in a school. Useful and healthy labor, judiciously applied without slavish toil, should afford all the necessary means of enjoying life. If ever the false pride of labor hating, and the false and foolish, and for all practical purposes of life, the present prevailing system of fashionable education is improved, it will be by such schools. There is evidently a growing disposition towards improvement in the agricultural community; but until that disposition has grown to a greater maturity, the great ends and objects of the pioneer friends of improvement cannot be brought about. Would not the foundation of "An American Society of Agriculture," be the means of increasing the little band of pioneers now in the field, until every town boasted of its useful agricultural school, and every legislature its majority of agriculturists, who would feel proud of being dressed, and elegantly too, in American silks and broadcloths?

Such a body of men would not need to be petitioned, year after year, before they would enact laws for the

purpose of preserving, improving and strengthening the base upon which rests the whole superstructure of civilized society. Fearing I am falling into a popular error, a tedious, lengthy list of words, I close abruptly. Your friend.

SOLON ROBINSON.

U. S. LAND SALES IN 1838.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, Sep. 15, 1838; from *La-Porte County Whig*]

[August 1, 1838]

SIR, The following is a list of the land Sales to be held this fall, in almost every land office in the west and south, and comprises about fifteon millions of acres of land—more probably than ever offered in any one year, since the foundation of the government. It is a blessed thing for this State, that the lands are taxable as soon as sold.

The left hand column are the dates of the commencement of each sale, which continue open two weeks, or until the lands are all offered; and the right hand column contains the quantity of Townships, as near as can be ascertained. Each Township being 36 sections of 640 acres each.

SALES IN INDIANA.

		TOWNSHIPS
Aug. 20,	at Laporte	2
Dec. 3,	" "	35
" 17,	" "	30
Oct. 8,	" Vincennes, Isl. & fractions,	
Nov. 12,	" Crawfordsville	19

SALES IN ILLINOIS.

Sept. 3,	at Danville	5
Nov. 5,	" "	21
Sept. 3,	" Vandalia,	about 3
" 17,	" Springfield,	13
Aug. 13,	" Shawneetown, sev. fract'ns.	
" 13,	" Quincy, "	

Nov.	5,	" "	31
"	19,	" Chicago,	31
Oct.	15,	" Galena,	12

SALES IN LOUISIANA

Oct.	1,	at Ouchita,	4
"	15,	" Opelousas,	4
"	18,	" New Orleans,	7

SALES IN ARKANSAS.

Oct.	22,	at Helena	18
Sept.	10,	" Batesville,	7
"	3,	" Fayetteville,	8
Oct.	8,	" Washington,	8
"	22,	" Little Rock,	2
"	8,	" " "	8
"	15,	" Fayetteville,	10

SALES IN OHIO.

Aug.	6,	at Marion sev. fractions	
Oct.	15,	" Bucyrus, " "	

SALES IN ALABAMA

Nov.	5,	" Mardisville,	17
Oct.	15,	" Montgomery,	10
"	8,	" Tuscaloosa, sev. fract'ns.	
"	22,	" Sparta,	12
"	8,	" Oahaba, about	2
Oct.	15,	at St. Stephens	4
"	1,	" Huntsville, Isl. & fract'ns.	
"	22,	" Denopolis sev. "	
"	29,	" Montgomery, "	

SALES IN MISSISSIPPI

"	29,	" Columbus,	3
Nov.	5,	" Augusta,	12
"	12,	" Chocouma,	28

SALES IN MICHIGAN

Nov.	5,	" Detroit,	21
"	19,	" Genesee,	21

Oct.	15,	at Ionia, several fractions,	
"	",	" Kalamazoo,	½
		SALES IN MISSOURI.	
Nov.	5,	" St. Louis,	10
"	19,	" Jackson,	3
Oct.	29,	" Palmyra,	10
Nov.	12,	" Lexington,	21
"	19,	" Fayette,	6
Dec.	3,	" Springfield,	39
		SALES IN IOWA.	
Nov.	19,	" Burlington,	26
"	5,	" Du Buque,	23
		SALES IN WISCONSIN.	
Oct.	22,	" Green Bay,	35
Nov.	5,	" " "	39
"	19,	" Milwaukie,	23
Dec.	3,	" "	43
Oct.	15,	" Mineral Point,	1
		In all 55 Sales, & Townships	660

fractions not counted—as in some offices "Ionia," particularly, there have been some *vulgar fractions,* that ought to be disposed of, as Government has been able to count them.

Yours, &c,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia.
August 1st, 1838.

P.S. Since making the above list, I see yet "one more" sale advertised on the 5th November, at St. Augustine, Florida, for the sale of 61 Townships; and on the 19th November, at the same office, another sale of 56 townships.

Making up a Grand Total of 57 sales, comprising 777 Townships; an ominous row of "odd numbers."

Novel Premiums.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 5:141-42; Oct., 1838]

Lake C. H. Ia. Aug. 27, 1838.

J. Buel, Esq.—Dear Sir—Not being blest with an overplus of gold and silver, I propose to offer a "barter trade," to any one desirous of obtaining a premium, upon the following proposition: I am the owner of sixteen lots, in one of the numerous new towns of the west. It was laid out in 1836, about three miles from the head of Lake Michigan, on the great western thoroughfare which passes the head of the lake, between Chicago and Michigan city.—[1] About $20,000 worth of lots were sold at the first sale, at prices higher than they now are worth.—Yet I find from the assessment roll of 1838, now on file in my office, that the average assessed value of my lots, is $55 each. The Buffalo and Mississippi rail-road, and a branch from the Lake Erie and Michigan canal to the Illinois canal, have been surveyed through the place, so that property is more likely to rise than fall. However, such as it is, I freely give, and if worthily won, I hope it may rise in value as fast as similar property has done all over the great west.

So, then, to the offer. I appreciate your remarks in the Cultivator, No. 6, on the great want of "Agricultural School Books." [2] Now to induce some one to begin a series of such elementary works, that will have a tendency to learn American youth such things as are the most important of all things for them to learn, that is, how to support themselves and families by the labor of their own hands, I offer, as a premium, five of the above

[1] Liverpool. From the spring of 1839 to the summer of 1840 Liverpool was the county seat of Lake County. See Robinson's note on "The 'Robinson Fund,'" in the *Cultivator*, 6:88 (July, 1839); Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 155-56.

[2] See Buel's editorial on "Common School Libraries," in the *Cultivator*, 5:101. Robinson's suggestions here anticipated the widespread demand for such books which developed in the fifties and grew more pronounced following the creation of state agricultural colleges in the sixties.

mentioned lots, to any person or persons who will publish a series of five numbers of an "Agricultural School Library," to be submitted to, and approved by you, or any other gentlemen that you may associate with you for that purpose.

And I will also give two of said lots, to any person that will publish another work, to be called, and to be what it is called, "The Farmers' Manual," to be also submitted to, and approved by you, and to contain such maxims and advice as will be useful to new beginners in agriculture, whether old or young; rules that will be useful to the wife as well as husband of such as are driven by necessity or choice from the employment in which they may have always been engaged, to take up the, to them, new employment of cultivation.[1]

Thousands are deterred from attempting to earn their own living, because they *don't know how to begin.* Such would rejoice to have it in their power to procure such a book, as much as a navigator upon a strange coast would rejoice in procuring a new chart.

And in addition to the premium, I will subscribe for ten copies of each work, and take the agency of selling them without commission. Will some one, more able than I am, add to the premium.

And I will also give further premiums, to other objects that you will point out as worthy, which will tend towards the same object. That is, the promotion of agricultural education; for I am convinced that the great object in view must be accomplished upon the rising generation.

[1] On August 28, Robinson wrote a similar letter to the editor of the *Franklin Farmer,* which appeared in the issue of October 13 (2:53-54), with an enthusiastic editorial comment, and a promise of support to the amount of $100. An editorial in the *Franklin Farmer* of October 27 (2:70), proposed that the agricultural press of the country unite and guarantee a premium of $500 for the best works submitted in accordance with Robinson's proposal. By November, 1838, the fund, including Robinson's lots at a value of $440, amounted to $760. *Cultivator,* 5:150. Additions were reported in *ibid.,* 5:185 (January, 1839).

A thought strikes me of another work worthy of "a premium lot,"—an Agricultural Dictionary; to be used not only as a necessary accompaniament to the series of school-books, but as an invaluable work in the hands of every cultivator. I venture to say, that there are not one half of the readers of the Cultivator, (and no paper uses less unintelligable phrases,) who are not often puzzled to give the proper signification to necessarily common words.—And to youth, the common names of soils, earths, and parts of plants, &c. are all Greek. To prove it, select fifty words that are found in every agricultural work, such as argillaceous, silicious, phosphate, sulphate, hydrate, carbonaceous, stamens, stolens, et cetera, (including the "et cetera,") and ask fifty of the first persons that you meet, to give you an intelligible definition of them, and see whether the answers do not demonstrate a very great necessity for our agricultural dictionary. If the publication of one cannot be induced, let me ask whether a page of your paper might not be profitably devoted to that purpose.[1] It is a great fault in all education, that we teach words without conveying any definite idea of their meaning.

One of the great benefits which I hope to live to see grow out of the formation of "the American Society for Agriculture," is an improved system of education throughout the whole country. I commend to your particular notice an article in No. 51, of the Franklin Farmer, upon "Agricultural Education."

What think you of a universal petition from all the friends of agricultural improvement and education in the U. S. to the next congress, for the establishment of a national agricultural school? Are we so much more of a

[1] The *Genesee Farmer* began such a glossary in 1839. When the paper was combined with the *Cultivator* at the beginning of 1840, the "Dictionary of Terms" was carried over with a comment on its excellent reception. The numbers which had appeared in the *Farmer* were reprinted "to furnish it complete" to the readers of the *Cultivator*. See *Cultivator* for January, 1840 (7:11-12), and following numbers.

warlike than an agricultural nation, that we endow a "military school," to the entire neglect of an agricultural one. Here, certainly is something wrong. "Something must be done,"—who will say, "something SHALL be done," and make the first step towards it by printing and sending a petition over the country for that purpose? The little that can be, will continue to be done, by your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

A LOOKING-GLASS.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 5:174-75; Dec., 1838[2]]

[October 12, 1838]

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir—When I was a boy, I can well remember how I used to be induced to wash my smutty face, by having a looking-glass held before my eyes. For the same purpose, I have extracted the following picture of "a farmer," from the writings of that most eccentric and excellent writer, "Samuel Slick,"[3] in the hopes that if any of your readers should happen to see any part of himself therein, that he will improve by the view. Here it is.

"* * * That critter, when he built that wrack of a house, (they call 'em a half house here,) intended to add as much more to it some of these days, and accord-

[1] Buel expressed his approval of Robinson's proposal as follows: "The ardor and zeal displayed by our esteemed correspondent, in his several communications, published in the Cultivator—directed, as they are, to the substantial improvement of the mind and the soil, are worthy of all praise. And he has given above unquestionable evidence of his sincerity, in the liberal offer he makes to subserve these noble ends. The mind must be enlightened before the soil can be improved. To second this generous proposal, we promise to add $20 to each of the six awards proposed in the above communication. How much will you add, philanthropic reader?"

[2] This article was reprinted in the *Southern Cultivator* of Augusta, Georgia, July 19, 1843 (1:113-14).

[3] Samuel Slick, of Slickville, a Yankee clockmaker, used as a character in the works of Thomas C. Haliburton. Introduced about 1835.

ingly put his chimbley outside, to sarve the new part as well as the old. He has been too "busy" ever since, you see, to remove the banking put there the first fall, to keep the frost out of the cellar, and consequently it has rotted the sills off, and the house has fell away from the chimbley, and he has had to prop it up with that great stick of timber, to keep it from coming down on its knees altogether. All the winders are boarded up, but one, and that might as well be, for little light can penetrate them old hats and red flannel petticoats. Look at the barn; its broken back roof has let the gable eends fall in, where they stand staring at each other, as if they would like to come closer together (and no doubt they soon will,) to consult what was best to be done to gain their *standing* in the world. Now look at the stock; there's your "improved short horns." Them dirty looking, half starved geese, and them draggle-tailed fowls that are so poor the foxes would be ashamed to steal them—that little lantern jawed, long leg'd, rabbit ear'd runt of a pig, that's so weak it cant curl its tail up—that old cow frame standing there with her eyes shut, and looking for all the world as tho' she's contemplating her latter eend—(and with good reason too,) and that other reddish yellow, long wooled varmint, with his hocks higher than his belly, that looks as if he had come to her funeral, and which by way of distinction, his owner calls a horse —is all "the stock," I guess, that this *farmer* supports upon a hundred acres of as good natural soil as ever laid out door.—Now there's a specimen of "Native Stock." I reckoon he'l imigrate to a warmer climate soon, for you see while he was waiting to finish that thing you see the hen's roosting on, that he calls a sled, he's had to burn up all the fence round the house, but there's no danger of cattle breaking into his fields, and his old muley has larnt how to sneak round among the neighbors fields o' nights, looking for an open gate or bars, to snatch a mouthful now and then. For if you was to mow that meadow with a razor and rake it with a fine

tooth comb, you could'nt get enough to winter a grasshopper. 'Spose we drive up to the door and have a word of chat with Nick Bradshaw, and see if he is as promising as outside appearances indicate.

Observing us from the only light of glass remaining in the window, Nick *lifted the door* and laying it aside, emerged from his kitchen parlor and smoke house, to reconnoitre. He was a tall, well built, athletic man, of great personal strength and surprising activity, who looked like a careless good natured fellow, fond of talking, and from the appearance of the little old black pipe which stuck in one corner of his mouth, equally so of smoking; and as he appeared to fancy us to be candidates, no doubt he was already enjoying in prospective the comforts of a neighboring tap room. Jist look at em —Happy critter—his hat crown has lost the top out, and the rim hangs like the bail of a bucket. His trowsers and jacket show clearly that he has had clothes of other colours in other days. The untan'd mocasin on one foot, which contrasts with the old shoe on the other, shows him a friend to domestic manufactures; and his beard is no bad match for the wooly horse yonder. See the waggish independent sort of a look the critter has, with his hat one side and hands in his breeches pockets, contemplating the beauties of his farm. You may talk about patience and fortitude, philosophy and christian resignation, and all that sort of thing till your tired, but—ah, here he comes. 'Morning Mr. Bradshaw—how's all home to day? Right comfortable, (mark that—comfort in such a place,) I give thanks—come, light and come in. I'm sorry can't feed your hoss—but the fact is, tan't bin no use to try to raise no crops, late years, for body don't git half paid for their labor, these hard times. I raised a nice bunch of potatoes last year, and as I could'nt get nothing worth while for 'em in the fall, I tho't I'de keep 'em till spring. But as frost set in, while I was down town 'lection time, the boys did'nt fix up the old cellar door, and this infarnal cold winter froze 'em all. It's

them what you smell now, and I've just been telling the old woman that we must turn too and carry them out of the cellar, 'fore long they'll make some of us sick like enough—for there's no telling what may happen to a body late years. And if the next legislator don't do something for us, the Lord knows but the whole country will starve, for it seems as tho' the land now a days won't raise nothing. It's actually *run out.* Why, I should think by the look of things round your neighbor Horton's, that his land produced pretty well. Why, yes—and it's a miricle too, how he gets it—for every body round here said, when he took up that tract, it was the poorest in the town.—There are some folks that thinks he has dealings with the "black art," for't does seem as tho' the more he work'd his land, the better it got.

Now, here was a mystery—but an easy explanation of Mr. Slick soon solved the matter, at least to my mind. The fact is, says Mr. Slick, a great deal of this country is *run out.* And if it warnt for the lime, marsh-mud, sea weed, salt sand, and what not, they've got here in such quantities, and a few Horton's to apply it, the whole country would *run out* and dwindle away to just such great, good natured, good-for-nothing, do-nothing fellows as this Nick Bradshaw, and his wooly horse, and wooless sheep, and cropless farm, and comfortless house, if indeed such a great wind rack of loose lumber, is worthy the name of a house.

Now, by way of contrast to all this, do you see that neat little cottage looking house on yonder hummock, away to the right there, where you see those beautiful shade trees. The house is small, but it is a *whole* house. That's what I call about right—flanked on both sides by an orchard of best grafted fruit—a tidy flower garden in front, that the galls see to, and a most grand sarce garden jist over there, where it takes the wash of the buildings, nicely sheltered by that bunch of shrubbery. Then see them everlasting big barns—and by gosh, there goes fourteen dairy cows—as sleek as moles. Them

flowers, honeysuckles and rose bushes, shows what sort of a family lives there, jist as plain as straws show which way the wind blows.

Them galls, an't 'tarnally racing round to quiltin and husking frolics, their feet exposed in thin slips to the mud, and their honor to a thinner protection. No, no—take my word for 't—when you see galls busy about such things to home, they are what our old minister used to call "right minded." Such things keep them busy, and when folks are busy about their own business, they've no time to get into mischief.—It keeps them healthy, too, and as cheerful as larks. I've a mind w'll 'light here, and view this citizen's mprovements, and we shall be welcomed to a neat substantial breakfast, that would be worthy to be taken as a pattern by any farmer's wife in America.

We were met at the door by Mr. Horton who greeted my friend Slick with the warm salutation of an old acquaintance, and expressed the satisfaction natural to one habitually hospitable, for the honor of my visit. He was a plain, healthy, intelligent looking man, about fifty, dressed as a farmer should be, with the stamp of "HOMESPUN," legible upon every garment, not forgetting a very handsome silk handkerchief, the work throughout of his oldest daughter. The room into which we were ushered, bore the same stamp of neatness and comfort that the outside appearance indicated. A substantial homemade carpet covered the floor, and a well filled book-case and writing desk, were in the right place, among the contents of which, I observed several Agricultural periodicals. I was particularly struck with the scrupulously neat and appropriate attire of the wife and two intelligent, interesting daughters, that were busily engaged in the morning operations of the dairy. After partaking of an excellent substantial breakfast, Mr. Horton invited us to walk over his farm, which, tho' small, was every part in such a fine state of cultivation, that he did not even express a fear of "starving, unless the legislature did something, to keep the land from running out."

We bade adieu to this happy family, and proceeded on our journey fully impressed with the contrast between a good and bad farmer, and for my own part, perfectly satisfied with the manner that Mr. Slick had taken to impress it indelibly upon my own mind.

Mr. Slick seemed wrapped in contemplation of the scenes of the morning for a long time. At length he broke forth in one of his happy strains. "The bane of this country, 'Squire, and indeed of all America, is having TOO MUCH LAND—they *run over* more ground than they can cultivate—and crop the land year after year, without manure, till it is no wonder that *"it's run out."* A very large portion of land in America has been "run out," by repeated grain crops, and bad husbandry, until a great portion of this great country is in a fair way to be ruined. The two Carolinas and Varginny are covered with places that are "run out," and are given up as ruined, and there are a plagey site too many such places all over New-England, and a great many other states. We hav'nt the surplus of wheat that we used to have, in the United States, and it'll never be so plenty while there are so many Nick Bradshaw's in the country.

The fact is, 'Squire, edecation is ducedly neglected. True, we have a site of schools and colleges, but they an't the right kind. That same Nick Bradshaw has been clean through one on 'em, and 'twas there that he larnt that infarnal lazy habit of drinking and smoking, that has been the ruin of him ever since. I would'nt give an old fashioned swing tail clock, to have my son go to college where he could'nt work enough to arn his own living, and larn how to work it right tu.

It actilly frightens me, when I think how the land is worked and skinned, till they take the gizard out on't, when it might be growing better every day.—Thousands of acres every year are turned into barrens, while an everlastin stream of our folks are streaking it off "to the new country," where about half on 'em after wading about among the tadpoles, to catch cat fish enough to

live on a year or two, actilly shake themselves to death with that everlasting cuss of all new countrys, the fever and agur. It's a melancholly fact, 'Squire, tho' our people don't seem to be sensible of it, and you nor I may not live to see it, but if this awful robbin' of posterity goes on for another hundred years, as it has for the last, among the farmers, we'll be a nation of paupers. Talk about the legislature doing something, I'll tell you what I'd have them do. Paint a great parcel of guide boards, and nail 'em up over every legislature, church, and schoolhouse door in America, with these words on em in great letters. "THE BEST LAND IN AMERICA, BY CONSTANT CROPPING, WITHOUT MANURE, WILL RUN OUT." And I'd have 'em, also, provide means to larn every child how to read it, cause it's no use to try to larn the old ones—they're tu sot in their ways.—They are on the constant stretch with the land they have, and all the time trying to git more, without improving any on't. Yes, yes, yes, *too much land* is the ruin of us all.

Although you will find a thousand more good things among the writings of "The Clockmaker," I hope you will not look for a *literal* copy of the foregoing. And if ever this meets the eye of the writer of the "Sayings and doings of Samuel Slick," I beg him to excuse me for the liberty I have taken with his own language. I remain your agricultural friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. Oct. 12, 1838.

THE SEASON IN INDIANA.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 5:191; Jan., 1839]

Lake C. H. Ind. Nov. 25th, 1838.

It is worthy of note that the drouth still continues in this section of the country to a distressing degree. The old adage, that, "winter never with rigour sets in, till the swamps with water are fill'd in," is completely falsified. The general character of the weather eight months past has been thus:—April cold and dry; May warm, without

a single shower; June hot, with two or three days about the 10th, of excessive rains and scalding hot; July and August constant sunshine and south wind that engendered much sickness; September and October continued dry sunshine, with two or three small showers and as many drizzly days, but not rain enough to prevent a complete exhaustion of springs, ponds, streams and marshes, &c.

November, the first days, warm and pleasant, Sunday night the 4th a snow fell about three inches—the 5th, 6th and 7th misty, and snow melted and came off excessive cold, destroying great quantities of potatoes and turnips; then moderately cold until the middle of the month, when the cold increased, and Sunday the 18th was a most severe cold day, freezing the ponds over, strong enough to bear a man. Since then it has been moderate, but now, the 25th, is again very cold. Cattle have required feeding all the month, and in many places water for stock is very difcult to be had.

This has been a season of suffering in the west.

Yours &c. SOLON ROBINSON.

THE BUR OAK.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 6:20; Mar., 1839]

Lake C. H. Ia. Jan. 25, 1839.

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir—Your note of the 31st. ult. is received. I shall send a box or bunch of the Bur oak acorns to you for your own use and distribution, at the first opening of navigation in the spring. If they will grow, I shall feel proud of having introduced a new variety of tree, and a good one, into your section of country. The tree requires a very strong soil. I am now using in my family, pork fatted upon the Bur oak acorns, which is to all appearance as good as corn fed, except it is more dry and less inclined to fry out much fat. The timber, too, when seasoned, is the most solid and strong of all oaks. The tree, when in foliage, is one of the most beautiful in the forest, though it does not grow com-

monly in "thick timber;" but it is found covering very large tracts of land called "barrens," an intermedium between prairie and timber; after growing so isolated as to have the appearance of a scattering orchard and having a strong resemblance to the work of man. You may travel miles before the country is settled, through these "barrens" with a carriage, without any obstruction. In these barrens the trees never grow large—the soil being deep, the roots are situate so far below the surface that they offer no obstruction to the plough, and these barrens are often ploughed without removing the timber. I remain your friend truly. SOLON ROBINSON.

HOW TO INCREASE THE CIRCULATION OF AGRICULTURAL PAPERS—SUBSCRIBERS' DUTIES.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 6:121; Aug. 15, 1839]

Lake C. H. Ia. July 18, 1839.

MY FRIEND—This is to you—I see you about to pass over and not read this article—you don't like the title! It an't interesting to you, do you say? Look again—look at the signature,—did you ever see my name to an article in this paper that did not interest you? There now, you see I am an old acquaintance. No. Well, then you did not take the last volume of the Cultivator. The more's the pity. Thousands who read that, will remember me right well. They will expect something interesting as soon as they see this article is from their old friend. I beg of them, as well as of the publisher, a thousand pardons that I have neglected them so long. My conscience has not been easy for months. I knew I had not done my duty. For when a man, particularly a friend to agricultural improvement, knows that he has a talent to be useful and interesting in his writing; that by a little light labor of his pen, that he can lighten the labor of his fellow laborers, he *neglects his duty* if he neglects to do it. You need not call me an egotist, because I say that I know I have that faculty. Thousands

have told me so; and I now here tell you that I have neglected my duty. Reader, have you neglected yours? did you write a letter to your paper, and because it was not published, say you would never write another? Did you say further, that you would never subscribe for the paper again? Shame on you then,—Oh! you was only angry a few minutes,—you're over it now, and think yours the best paper in the world. You think you made an hundred dollars more off of your farm last year in consequence of taking it. So do I. I'll tell you another thing that I think. I think that the readers of the Albany Cultivator alone, made $50,000 more in their various occupations last year in consequence of reading it; and equally so of the New-England Farmer,[1]—The Genesee Farmer,[2]—the Franklin Farmer,[3]—the American Farmer,[4] and so on of every good farmer's paper, in just proportion. There is another thing I think; that the increased value of those readers' farms is twenty times the above sum. There is another thing I think; think, why, I know it. I know it by my own feelings. I know that the increased happiness of those readers was worth twenty times more than all the increase of property. Suppose then that the circulation was doubled,—yes, but don't every body subscribe that wants to, now? No, not half. But you can get them to—and it is *your duty* to do it; you an't able to pay for any papers to give any. Who asked you to do it? There is your neighbor Jones that always is reading yours when he can get a chance, and who never has a dollar that he thinks he can spare to pay the subscription; would be glad to take the paper and pay you in chopping wood. Now do you think you

[1] *New England Farmer,* published at Boston, Massachusetts. Established 1822.

[2] *Genesee Farmer,* published at Rochester, New York. Established 1831.

[3] *Franklin Farmer,* published at Frankfort, Kentucky. Established 1837.

[4] *American Farmer,* published at Baltimore, Maryland. Established 1819.

did your duty last year? you know you had a two dollar bill, and it cost you some trouble to get it changed when you sent for yours; you might just as well have sent for two copies and let Jones have had one. He would'nt have lost them two fine old sheep if he had read the Cultivator; because he would have seen that ruta bagas were just what they wanted. But poor man; did'nt know it. There is your neighbor Williams too; you had some dealings with him, and he would have been glad to have taken the paper from you, "in the way of trade;" "because that would not be paying out money," though you paid it to him. Now you know that he lost nearly all his first planting of corn by the insects, birds, &c.; and then came up to your house to "get the receipt out of the paper how to doctor the seed." But then it was too late to replant; so he planted beans. Did you ever see a finer crop? Got nicely ripe and pulled and hung up on the scattering corn, lugged out to the fence, and stone heaps, &c. to put up to dry. Well, there came on a long warm rain; and poor man, he lost the whole of them nearly, more than an hundred bushels. Do you remember when he came to your barn, and the conversation? "Did'nt you lose your beans, neighbor Thomas, that warm rain?" says he in perfect astonishment, "I saw you pulling them the same day I did,—and mine were the ripest. Why bless me, how bright they do thrash out. Now in God's name, do tell me how you saved them?"

"Why, I read it in the Cultivator more than a year ago."

"Good heavens, 'twould have been worth more than an hundred dollars to me."

"So it was to me—and then it's so easy and simple; take a parcel of stakes,—I took old bean poles out of the garden,—out into the field and stick 'em round, and put a few stones or sticks at the bottom, and then pull the beans: no matter how green they are, and stack them up with the roots touching the stalkes until you get high enough; and then tie the top course with a little straw

or a string, and the trouble is all over; they will cure as well as a shock of corn, and injure less."

"Well now, I have always intended to take that paper, —but I never had a dollar to spare at the right time to send for it." Now my friend, do you think you did your duty? If you had, would you not have sent for a paper for each of these neighbors, and in a manner compelled them to take them?

I got five and twenty into circulation "in the way of trade;" can't you? don't be mistaken,—I mean YOU.— Can't you get one; just one more subscriber; it is *your duty*. Nothing can sustain this government but an improvement in her agricultural branches. I don't know how many hundred millions of dollars we are in debt. We? Yes, WE. You and I, and every *producer* in the government. On that debt annual interest must be paid. Must be paid by a tax on agriculture. Let it be mystified as much as it may, 'tis the only way whereby under heaven that it can be paid. 'Tis the farmer that pays for every rail-road and canal, whether useful or not; and when farmers are so much in debt, it is time they were improving the means to get out. How can they improve without they gain knowledge? How can they gain knowledge unless they read? How can they read unless they are provided with papers or books. How can some of your neighbors provide themselves, unless you assist them? Then for once attend to this SOLEMN DUTY. Don't let your conscience rest one day, until you have procured one more subscriber to this paper. And if you can't procure a subscriber, send yourself and procure another set, (20 if you are able,) and distribute them among your neighbors; you will soon see the leaven work; the corn will come up, the beans will be saved, and you will rejoice at the end of the year, as you think to yourself, "how much good I have done with so small a sum." And here I make you a proposition. At the end of the year if you are dissatisfied that you have followed my advice, write to the publisher and your money shall be refunded

to you. He will endorse this proposition for me I guess.

And this reminds me, the last of my "extra" numbers is used up "in the way of trade;" add another to my list, I must keep one on hand; 'tis *my duty*; 'tis the way I make up my list of subscribers—and it is certainly a large list for a place so new, where all are poor and new beginners in life.

But the effects are visible. There are no "Nick Bradshaw's" in this settlement.

There are some other duties that "we owe one another," but my letter is already too long. I shall write again. In the meantime think of the *duties* here pointed out. Can you deny them to be truly stated? Then instead of thinking, be up and doing; and truly you shall meet your reward. Most truly your agricultural friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

PLANS OF FARM HOUSES.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 6:164; Nov., 1839]

Lake C. H. Ia. Sept. 5, 1839.

Hon. J. BUEL—My worthy friend—I am much pleased with some of the plans in your last (August) number. That to which you have awarded the premium, certainly is a very convenient house for any family, farmer or other occupation: and I certainly think that that single number of the Cultivator is worth more to every person expecting to build, than all he ever has or ever will pay for the paper.

That the "bump of design and constructiveness," is not possessed by a very large majority of mankind, I think is, or can be fully attested, by viewing the thousands of piles of brick and mortar, and lumber, called dwelling-houses, throughout the country. It seems to me, that if the builders of a great many houses which I have seen, had put all their art and skill in play to make them *in*convenient and *un*comfortable, they could not have succeeded better to their wishes.

But the truth is, that men would rather build a convenient than an inconvenient house, if they knew how; but unfortunately they cannot tell how their own design will suit, until the house is built and tried. And where is a farmer to find good plans of farm buildings? Can you tell, sir? I think not. For in all the architectural designs that ever I have examined, I never have found them. And yours is the first paper that ever I have seen such very useful things published in. I hope you will continue the good work. And I hope every one of your readers, whose *wife* thinks he has a very convenient house, will furnish you at least the ground plan: so that out of a great variety, you might select the best for publication, and out of these certainly every person, by adopting one plan, or parts of several, could always suit his own taste better far than he could do by adopting an original design of his own. I think it will be conceded, that you cannot fill a portion of the Cultivator with more useful matter than such drawings. I hope the additional expense to you will not deter you.

To begin, then, I offer you the ground plan of my own house. It is not of so much consequence to give the elevation, unless where a detailed bill of expense is given.

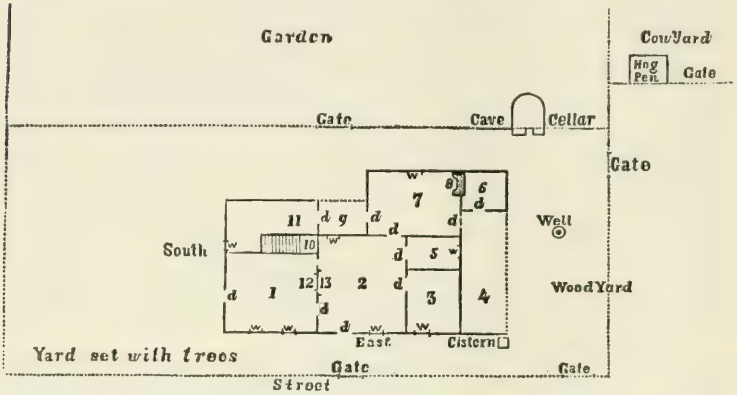
You have heretofore given a great many excellent plans of out buildings, &c.; that ought also to be continued. No one is fully aware how valuable such plans are, until he commences building himself, and then he sees the want of them. Furnishing farmers with good cheap plans will also tend to prevent another error that some have committed—that is, building a house so big that the whole farm, stock and cash, are sometimes all swallowed up in the house, before it is completed.

It is said that the author of the Declaration of American Independence, swallowed up $70,000 in building a "great house," which has been since sold with 200 acres of land, for $2,500, and now stands a monument of the lack of any proper design in the builder. We all know that the owner died, lacking that independence that he

declared all ought to enjoy. This great misshapen mass of materials, was the great cause of his pecuniary embarrassments.

Then let all builders beware, that they do not build a house so big that they cannot live in it, nor so good that when done they cannot use it. I remain, as usual, your friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

PLAN OF A WESTERN PRAIRIE COTTAGE.—[Fig. No. 42.]



Explanations.

1. Spare room in the southeast corner of the house, 16 by 16 feet.
2. Common family room, eating room in summer, and cooking room in winter, situated in the centre of the house, so as easily to be kept warm; 15 by 18 feet.
3. Bed-room, 9 by 11 feet.
4. Wood shed in winter and wash shed in summer, 10 by 21 feet.
5. Pantry, 7 by 9 feet.
6. Room for soap, meat, &c. 7 by 10 feet.
7. Kitchen, 12 by 14 feet.
8. Kitchen fire-place.
9. Open passage, to give light to west windows of common room, 6 by 9 feet.
10. Chamber stairs.

11. Buttery, 9 by 16 feet, excepting stairway.
12. Parlor stove. d. Doors.
13. Cooking stove. w. Windows.

In the draft, I have sketched the position of the well, cistern, garden, yards, &c. which I consider as a necessary part of the "fixings" about a farmer's house.—Upon our soil, cellars under the house are not admissible; and in my opinion, should never be made under a dwelling-house, only in very dry soils, and then *always kept clean.*

My house is built of hewn logs, but the same plan might be adopted in using any material. It is esteemed a very convenient house, without a foot of waste room.

The south part is a story and a half, the ridge running east and west; the other part one story, the ridge running north and south, and roof extending down over the kitchen. The woodshed is a "lean-to" on the north end.

I am much in favor of one story farm houses. They are much easier for the good woman, and I believe the extra cost of roofing is fully saved in several ways. The frame need not be near as strong for a single story, particularly in a windy situation; and comfort and convenience never should be dispensed with by a farmer for show.

If you think the plan would be of sufficient interest to your readers to warrant its publication, and if I could ever be assured that it added an hour's comfort, or saved a dollar of expense to one of them, I shall be happy to think I have given it. I hope you will be furnished with numerous other plans, so that all tastes may be suited.

Your friend, &c.

SOLON ROBINSON.

MAMMOTH SUNFLOWER.

[Albany *Cultivator,* 6:166; Nov., 1839]

Lake C. H. Ia. September 23, 1839.

J. BUEL, Esq.—Dear Sir—Enclosed I send you a few seed of what appears to me as a remarkable prolific sunflower, and also as illustrative of the fact, that all of our

domestic plants may be greatly improved by care in selecting seed. I have practised for several years past, saving seed from the principal head on the most prolific stalk, and last year I thought I had nearly arrived at the heighth of bearing power, when I had a stalk with forty heads. But the seed which I now send you, is from a stalk with sixty-five seed heads, which grew in my garden the present season. I venture to say there would have been at least ten more heads, but another stalk grew so close on one side that it prevented the branches from spreading in that direction.

Perhaps however, that all this, to you may not be in anywise remarkable or worth notice, but to me, and others who have seen it growing, it is considered so.— It is a well known fact that parsnip and carrot seed, and probably many others of similar branching kind of plants, should only be saved from the principal head. And it seems reasonable to me, that every vegetable may be improved by care in selecting the seed, as easily as I have improved this sunflower.[1]

Many may ask what is the use of raising the sunflower? I reply that it is worth as much or more than corn, and is exceedingly healthy to feed all domestic animals, and particularly hens and horses, and whenever it is raised in sufficient quantities to warrant it, oil mills will be built that will create a good market for the seed. And if no other use than mere ornament was made of it, I should much rather see it growing in waste corners, than useless noxious weeds. I hope you will do me the favor to plant a few of the seeds that I send you, if for no other purpose, that when you look upon their growth, it may be a happy memento to you that there is one other than yourself, that rejoices in every improvement he sees made in the agricultural pursuits of a country, that must soon degenerate below the regard of some of her warmest friends, unless the present awakening

[1] Robinson here sets forth a doctrine which later formed the basis of operation for many distinguished plant breeders.

spirit of improvement, is made to assume an ever waking watchfulness throughout the whole community.

I am proud to subscribe myself one of your agricultural friends. SOLON ROBINSON.

LETTER FROM SOLON ROBINSON, ESQ.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:19; Jan., 1840]

[December 14, 1839]

EDITORS OF THE CULTIVATOR:

Doubts and fears came over my mind, on seeing the announcement of the death of that most useful, and one of the greatest friends of the agricultural community, the late editor of this paper.[1] But could I be assured of life until such time as my memory would be crowned with such honors as this nation have universally poured out of sorrowing hearts upon his, I would ask no greater fame, or proud memorial for my children, than he has left for his. May the mantle of their father rest upon them, and may they be possessed of that fathers' meekness to wear it becomingly. No doubt but it troubled his last moments, as to what should be the fate of his darling journal. Whether it would be able to sustain life when its heart was taken away, or whether it would follow him to that cold and silent tomb. How it must have brightened his mind at that dark hour, could he have foreseen the present bright prospects, that are now dawning anew upon this paper. No step could have been taken by those into whose hands it fell, so well calculated to carry out the good intentions of its founder, as this one of uniting it with the Genesee Farmer. A consolidation of interest will create an expansion of usefulness. The business is arranged so late, that perhaps many at a distance will not be able to become acquainted with the fact in time to partake of the benefits the present season, but I am sure that much good will come of the union.

[1] Judge Jesse Buel, editor of the *Cultivator*, died at Danbury, Connecticut, October 6, 1839. The *Cultivator* and *Genesee Farmer* were consolidated at the beginning of 1840.

Enclosed I send you a list of names which I shall hold myself responsible for, though I have not had an opportunity of seeing many of the persons.

I wish those who are anxious to extend the circulation of the paper, would act a little more upon my recommendation in the November No.[1] Induce people to take the paper, money or no money—I will advance the money, and take my pay of subscribers in anything that grows by cultivation.

Friends of agricultural improvement, common schools and common sense, be up and doing—doing good—cause this paper to circulate—to be read—and those that read, must, will, shall improve. And upon your death bed you will remember with gratitude, the founder of this paper, and I hope also with ample reason therefor, the present editors, that they have been the means of not only increasing your own happiness, but of enabling you to do so much good to so many of your fellow creatures.

Let every subscriber who is able, take two papers, one to preserve and bind, and one on purpose to lend. Let them also be introduced into common schools.

Gentlemen editors and proprietors, my best wishes are with you Most respectfully,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., Dec. 14, 1839.

BURNING PRAIRIES, &c.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:33; Feb., 1840]

[December 15, 1839]

EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—I have just read an account in the "Christian Keepsake, Philadelphia," of the "burning of a prairie, and a whole family that perished in the conflagration," that is going the round of papers that delight in the marvellous, and which is calculated to create

[1] "A Hint to the Publisher and Friends of the Cultivator," suggesting that the commission for securing subscribers be a postage allowance. *Cultivator*, 6:181.

a very erroneous impression in regard to a prairie country. Such tales as this are vastly amusing to us who dwell upon the great western prairies; but to those who know naught of them, it is a wonder how we escape from such "a vast sea of fire," as they suppose annually "rolls in terrific grandeur," over the whole face of the country. Let me assure you that all these wonderful fire stories are more smoke than fire.

The idea of burning men, oxen, wagons, horses, and every thing that happens to be in the way, belongs to the great humbug family.

The soil of prairies is as diversified in character as that of a timbered country, varying from dry and hilly, to deep and miry swamp. The great body is dry, tillable land, and in a state of nature, is covered with a thick short grass, that would, if closely mowed, afford about three-fourths of a ton to the acre. When dry and dead in the fall of the year, it is very easy to burn, and will make just such a "sea of fire" as would a late mown piece of timothy meadow. Unless the wind is blowing with great fury, it is easy to extinguish, by beating it with a bush, board, shovel, or even an old hat; and a man can pass across the line of fire with all ease, or ride through it, or run away from it. I have often done each, and I have seen hundreds of miles of rail fence built upon the prairie, through which the fire passed annually, without setting it on fire, except in rare instances.

'Tis only in the great marshes, where horses or wagons can not travel, and consequently can not be consumed, that the numerous poetical descriptions of "a burning prairie" have any application. Upon some of these grow a very rank growth of vegetation, six or eight feet high in places, but generally about equal to a very good piece of mowing meadow, which makes a great fire, and would endanger the life of man or beast to come in contact with it. The space between the wet and dry land affords the best grass for hay. In this county in particular, the quality is excellent, and if well put up, cattle and sheep

will eat it in preference to timothy or red top. The dry prairie also affords good hay, but very tedious gathering. The common marsh hay is no better than the "bog meadow hay" of the east. For a grazing country, none can be superior to this. Prairie grass beef, butter and cheese, is equal to any other for sweetness and richness; sheep are ever fat. Hogs, I cannot tell what they would do, for there are no animals here but would disgrace the name. Horses do not do well upon prairie feed, summer or winter; but the way we can raise oats and wheat upon our prairie land, is more wonderful than all the great fires that I have ever seen. It seems to be the delight of some writers to propagate error; but no person who has ever traveled over a prairie country, will believe that man or beast ever lost life in the "great conflagration" of dry grass which covers the land, which will not average more than six inches high. If the growth was very great, it could not be turned under with the plow at midsummer, which is the time that it is sought to be done by every good farmer.

Speaking of plowing, reminds me that it may be amusing to eastern readers, to hear a description of a "prairie plow." Fancy, then, a plow share weighing 125lbs., the beam fourteen feet long, attached to a pair of cart wheels, to the tongue of which are hitched from three to seven yoke of oxen, turning an unbroken sod, eighteen to twenty-six inches wide, and sometimes a mile in length, and you have a picture of "breaking prairie," more true, and more interesting than some accounts of a "burning prairie."

The sod of the prairie grass is very tough, and sometimes full of the roots of a diminutive bush called "red root," that are exceeding strong, and which require a sharp plow and strong team. A great fault, in my opinion, in breaking prairie, is not plowing deep enough. I have seen thousands of acres plowed only from two to three inches deep. If the season is wet, the sods will rot, but if dry, they become hard, and are in the way

for years. Corn is often planted by dropping in every third furrow as the plowing proceeds, and singular as it may appear to eastern cultivators, often produces twenty bushels to the acre without any after culture. Oats and wheat are often harrowed in upon the sod, and produce good crops. If plowed deep, that is, five or six inches at first, it is best to put in the second crop without disturbing the sod. The necessities of the new settler should be the only excuse for breaking prairie early in the spring, or late in the fall; and above all, the new settler should not attempt too much the first year. But the land is so inviting, that he often overtasks himself, and gets a large field in crop, but half fenced, and undue exertion and exposure of health brings on an attack of that universal malady in all new countries, the ague, and he is left worse off than ever any emigrant was from the "awful effects of a burning prairie."

For the amusement of some of your eastern readers who have forgot "auld lang syne," I intend in my next to illustrate life in a log cabin.

Respectfully, &c.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. Dec. 15, 1839.

CHEAP SHEDS FOR CATTLE—CHEAP GATES—AND OTHER MATTERS.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:52; Mar., 1840]

[January 24, 1840]

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast."

EDITORS OF THE CULTIVATOR—I wish your correspondent, "L. A. M.," would write his name in full. Not that it would add value to his valuable essays upon sheep husbandry; but a man, possessed of such benevolent feelings towards the brute creation, must be a valuable acquaintance: and one great advantage, derived from such a work as the Cultivator, or your late Genesee Farmer, is, that it adds many valuable acquaintances to our pres-

ent stock, from which a reciprocal benefit is often derived.[1] Now, sirs, if were passing through Tompkins county, I should no more think of passing the house of "L. A. M." (if I could find him out,) than I should think of passing my own brother. Indeed, all the pioneers in agricultural improvement should feel like brothers. Money could not buy the enjoyment I have derived from circumstances which have grown out of my correspondence with agricultural papers. If flattering eulogies can advance one's happiness, the few trifling efforts of mine to be useful, have certainly increased my happiness, in a manner that riches cannot afford; and I hope the happiness of "L. A. M." may be increased, by knowing that there is one who appreciates his merciful feelings towards domestic animals, as shown in his communication in the January number.

The temporary protection to cattle, noticed by "L. A. M.," or something similar, is all that can be given in a new settled country like many parts of the West. And here, it often pains me to see such a want of forethought, want of energy, want of mercy towards stock, or else a most lamentable want of "the know how." If it is the want of "know how," I should be happy to bestow knowledge, gratis. I have good, warm stabling for some forty head of cattle and sheep, that did not cost ten dollars. The sides are built with rails laid up in pens about two or three feet wide, supported of course by cross pieces, and the space filled in with old hay, straw, turfs, or small bushes with the leaves on, until the requisite height is attained, and then covered with poles, rails, and coarse hay. Any quantity of hay for covering can be had in a prairie country, for a small amount of labor. A

[1] Lewis A. Morrell, of Tompkins County, New York, had been a contributor to the *Genesee Farmer*. His article "Management of Sheep—No. 8" appeared in the January *Cultivator*, 1840 (7:15), the first number issued after the consolidation of the two papers. Morrell was one of the founders of the Tompkins County Agricultural and Horticultural Society. *Cultivator*, March, 1840 (7:42).

small ditch or bank on the upper side, keeps the water from the bank inside, which, well covered with straw, makes an excellent floor. Such a stable will last with slight repairs, three or four years; and yet how many expose their whole stock, winter after winter, by the side of a stack on the open prairie, where the north-west wind sometimes blows almost hard enough to take their hides from their backs, were it not for the natural adhesiveness between "skin and bone." Others make vast improvement upon such "tender mercy," and shut them up in a "log stable without chinking or daubing," with two rails crosswise for a door, and through which the wind whistles loud enough to break the heart of a man possessed of a tithe of the kind feelings of "L. A. M." Here, fed upon a scanty allowance of prairie hay, (which, by-the-bye, is good or bad, as it is cut and cured,) the poor creatures drag out a miserable existence. And, do you inquire, do they live? Yes, sometimes: for nature, more provident than their cruel masters, provides them with a coat of hair, that would do honor to "Nick Bradshaw's wooly horse." In the spring, the cows bring forth a poor "runt of a calf"—the owner curses the bad breed of bulls, and the wife wonders why her cows don't give milk like some of her neighbors. The sheep, like the cattle, shed their winter coat, and without the trouble of shearing; furnishing, however, a rare opportunity for the exercise of industry to the "wool gatherers."

Can a man be a good man, who so treats his domestic animals? I fear such treatment is not confined to this country. If agricultural schools are ever established, I hope one of the first principles taught, will be that "a merciful man is merciful to his beast."

But enough of cheap stables, sheds, &c. Now, about CHEAP GATES. I write for the poor—the new beginner.

I have some two dozen gates on my place, and not a scrap of iron, except the nails, about them. I can make and hang one, cheaper than I can made a set of bars. In fact, I would not have the latter on my farm.

The hanging post of the gate projects two or three inches below the bottom slat, and is rounded off to a point which stands in a hole bored about an inch deep in a block, set nearly even with the surface next to the post which the gate hangs to, or if that post is hewed, a shoulder may be left, in which a hole can be bored with a very short handle auger. The top of the hanging post projects six inches above the upper slat, and is made round, and is kept to its place by a tough hoop, nailed to the gate post. I can make and hang two or three such gates in a day, and the expense is very trifling. When a hinge breaks, it is easily repaired without running to the blacksmith. I consider a gate, "a labor-saving piece of machinery," and I think none would do without them, if they knew how cheap they could have them.

There is another great labor-saving machine, that I am astonished how any farmer can do without. It is the humble wheelbarrow. If this was some new invention, every one would be running after it—at all events, when he used it.

Forgive me, if I have become tedious, and accept the kind respects of your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court-House, Ind'a, Jan. 24, 1840.

ROBINSON: EARLY WILL

[Ms. in Harry Robinson Strait Papers, Gary]

[February 25, 1840]

This is the last Will and testament of Solon Robinson of the County of Lake and State of Indiana—

Item 1st It is my will that my wife, Mariah Robinson, should be my Executor, and that she may appoint any person whom she may elect as her co-executor, to do which she is hereby fully authorised—Should my wife, however, die before proving this will, I appoint my oldest son then living at my death, if he is 21 years of age, and resident near my family, and possessed of a good education and a fair moral character; which the

Probate Court shall enquire into before granting him letters of executorship—

Item 2d In default of either of the aforesaid executorships it is my will that the Probate Court appoint some disinterested, judicious moral man, who will be willing to serve as such, and also as guardian of my children—

Item 3d If my wife is my executor, I do not desire that she should make any inventory of my effects whatever, but that she should dispose of any, all, or any part of my personal property, or real estate, deeds for which I hereby authorise her to make, or cause her co-executor to make, and with the avails of such property sold, or with money on hand, or debts due me, pay all just and honest demands upon me or my estate, if possible, within one year from my death—

Item 4—If my son, or a stranger administer upon my estate, I desire a complete and perfect inventory made, at fair cash prices, and that each of my children be allowed to select all such articles as they desire, which shall not be sold until it is found necessary to do so to pay my debts—Such as is not so selected may be sold at any time and manner that my executor may see fit, and if real estate, execute deeds therefor—And if found to be adviseable, sell all, and pay all my just debts—

Item 5—After paying all demands upon my estate, I leave the disposal of the remainder, first, to my wife during her widowhood, for the purpose of her own support, and my children—and particularly to give each of them a good common school education—If she marries, I give her unconditionaly one half of all the property that may then be in her possession, (after having discharged all my debts) a true inventory of which I require to be made and filed in the Probate Court, and I charge the judge therof to see this part of my will executed—After selecting her share, I charge her co-executor if then acting as such, or an

administrator to be appointed by the Court, to take charge of the remainder, to be sold and the avails put at interest, or to be kept, or divided, as may seem best for the equal benefit of my children, in supporting or educating them during their minority, and then dividing the residue equaly among all of them, possessed of a good moral character—Provided that if the girls should either of them before arriving at the age of 21 years, be married to a poor, industrious moral mechanic or farmer, she shall be immediately entitled to her share—If one of them marry such a man, and the other marry a rich man, or one well able to live without his wife's portion, she who marrying the first named, shall be entitled to the portion of both—And in case of my sons, if either become established in any mechanichal or agricultural employment, before the age of 21, and is possessed of a good, steady, sober, industrious character, it is my wish that he be invested with his share of my estate, and that neither of my children should ever be invested with such share until they prove such a character before the Probate Court, and have the same entered of record—And in case of such disability to receive his or her portion at the age of 21 years, I wish the guardian having possession thereof, to invest that share at interest, in periods of 5 years, until that disability is removed, or in case of death in the party previously thereto, Then that share shall go for the benefit of the children of the deceased, or in default of children, to the other brothers & sisters, or their children—

Item 6th In case of the death of my wife taking place during her widowhood, after paying all her debts, out of my property in her hands, then the residue to be disposed of as above provided in item fifth—

Item 7th Such advances of property or money as she shall make to either of my children during their minority, or after they begin to *act* for themselves, shall be counted as a portion of the share finaly coming to

them provided she shall be under no obligations, except of her own free will and accord to make any dividend or advances to them, only as before provided in case of her again marrying—my object being, that during their minority, she should maintain the same control over my children in all things, that I now do myself—And that during her life time, that she should maintain the same control, and exercise all the rights and immunities that I now do over my property—And in doing so, and accepting the provisions of this will, that she shall relinquish all other rights or claims to my estate—I view a wife, as a joint partner in business, entitled to control the property, and bound to pay the debts of the death dissolved partnership—

Item 8—It is my wish that the least possible expense compatible with a decent observance of the forms and ceremonies of society, be made about my funeral, and that no change whatever be made in the dress of my surviving relatives on account of my death—The only monument that I wish should mark my burial place, is a fruit tree planted by the hands of each of my children, at proper distances from my grave, and such fence as may be necessary to protect their growth—

Thus as I decay and turn to earth,
That something good may have a birth—

Item 9th I hereby revoke and anul all former wills, by me at any time or place before made—And I confirm this my present and last will with my hand and seal at Lake Court House in the County of Lake and State of Indiana, this twentyfifth day of February Eighteen hundred and forty, in presence of the undersigned witnesses, to whom I have made known that this is my last will—

SOLON ROBINSON— [Seal]

Witnesses
JOHN H BRADLEY
SAML C. SAMPLE
Signed in the presence of the
testator & of each other

Weather, Crops, &c. in Indiana.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:64; Apr., 1840]

[February 28, 1840]

Editors of the Cultivator—Heavy peals of thunder are now rattling over our heads. This has been a remarkable month. But little snow has fallen, and none laying on the ground. The weather has been, for some days, much like April or May—frost nearly all out, and ground so dry that some plows have been started. This is very unusual for so high a latitude as 41-2, even in the West. The months of December and January were very steady cold, and good sledding nearly the whole time. The first snow fell while the ground was yet soft; consequently, the roots of the wheat have been kept in fine order, and the crop now is exceedingly promising. There is still an immense quantity of the last crop in the hands of the growers, at 50 cents a bushel.

As the great Western Prairies began to furnish this staple to the east, it will soon be time for farmers there to turn their attention to other products. For, as here no regard is paid to the preservation of the quality of the soil, while its present quality lasts the eastern farmer cannot compete with the western wheat grower.

You would suppose that some imagine that this soil can never deteriorate, to see them moving their stables to a new location, on account of the accumulations of manure, and setting fire to immense piles of straw "to get it out of the way." But such are the facts. You can easily imagine how long the best soil will last under such a system of cultivation.

The December number of the Cultivator is just received. I cannot speak in too exalted terms of him whom so many thousands will delight to keep in remembrance, by looking upon his fine intellectual face.[1]

My warmest wish, gentlemen, is that you may be enabled to fill his editorial chair, with honor and credit

[1] An engraved portrait of Jesse Buel, late editor of the *Cultivator*, was sent out with the December issue. *Cultivator*, 6:193.

to yourselves, and satisfaction to his numerous admirers. And when the time comes that we shall have nothing but your likeness to look upon, may you enjoy that most enviable of posthumous fame, that the world are now bestowing upon your much lamented predecessor. And so far, I am in candor bound to say, the evidence is strongly in your favor.

I remain your devoted agricultural friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court-House, Feb. 28, 1840.

HOG ILLUSTRATION—A TRUE PICTURE.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:81-82; May, 1840[1]]

[March 15, 1840]

MESSRS. EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—We are all of us willing to show forth any thing that will illustrate any favorite theory, or favorite breed of cattle that shows to our own advantage. Would it not be equally useful if we were equally willing to illustrate the reverse of the picture? I think it would. And, therefore, I offer the following TRUE PICTURE of the profits of that universal breed of hogs, that covers the face of our country, to the exclusion of a better breed.

When I settled in this new country a few years ago, I determined that I never would be the owner of any of that vile race of animals which infest the country, and which, before the discovery of the name of "land sharks," used to be known by the name of hogs. But being unable to procure any thing worthy of the name, the force of circumstances made me the owner of several breeding sows in the winter of 1837, then running in the woods. With a force of dogs, men and guns, I caught and brought them home, and confined them in a lot, where I kept my cattle upon prairie hay. I found no difficulty in wintering these wild animals which I had bought for hogs upon the same. In the spring, they "multiplied and replenished" the woods. In the fall there

[1] Reprinted in *Franklin Farmer*, Lexington, Kentucky, 3:301 (May 16, 1840).

was not sufficient "mast" [i. e. acorns and nuts] to fatten them; and I was not so *green* as to undertake making pork of them with corn, and they lived to multiply another season.

The next fall, *mast* was plenty, and "wood hogs" were fat. I now had "from fifty to one hundred head," but fat hogs in the woods will die; and when killing time came, I could only lay violent hands on eighteen. Only one-half of them were fit to be called pork. I still had a large "claim" upon hogs in the woods; but last fall I could only muster some ten or a dozen "fit to fatten;" and these I let a neighbor, not so well experienced in *hogology* as I was, have to "fat at the halves." By strong exertions, he succeeded in making a pen stout enough to keep them upon a continual trot around it, without finding an outlet. Here, after eating and wasting in the mud more than fifty bushels of corn apiece, he brought me my half of "hog meat." Another neighbor being destitute, and this looking to him "as though it might be eatable," I told him to take it, and we would never quarrel about the price or mode of payment; and I bought my "pork" for my own use.

But this is not the end of my hog speculation. I still had five shoats, and upon them I determined to try what good keeping would do. Accordingly, I "caught them," and put them in a good warm pen, composed of an eating room, a sleeping room, and a retiring room. Nearly every day have I furnished these (permit me to say, devils) with good dry straw, and nearly every night have they slept in a wet, filthy bed. The straw they have eat and scattered through the pen, and all the filth that they should have left in the outside room, they have deposited in their beds. Whoever knows me, knows that no domestic animal of mine, ever lacks food; and it has not been spared upon these in the pen. Forgive me, but I can't call them hogs. Ruta bagas, beets, potatoes, bran, and house slops, including the milk of two cows, all winter, have not been spared.

Reader, is the feed and care thus bestowed, worth one cent a head each day? Then from the first of October to this time is 166 days. I offer you a speculation. Give me one dollar each, and the animals now ten months old, are yours; and I will give you my bond with good security, that, so far as I am concerned, you shall have a perfect monoply of all the breed, from this time, henceforth and forever.

I have written to Mr. Allen,[1] at Buffalo, for a pair of HOGS, and I shall send to Mr. Bement,[2] at Albany, for another pair, by the first opportunity.

Will either of these gentlemen, or some other, publish a reverse to my picture?

I am a most sincere hater of alligators and landpikes.[3]

Your friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court-House, Ia. March 15, 1840.

PLANS FOR HARRISON CONVENTION

[Indianapolis *Semi-Weekly Journal*, Apr. 7, 1840]

LAKE C. H. IA., March 27, 1840.

Messrs. DOUGLASS & NOEL:

I have seen the suggestion to postpone the meeting upon the Tippecanoe battle ground, until the 4th of July.[4]

[1] Anthony Benezet Allen, born in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, June 24, 1802; died January 12, 1892. Founder of the *American Agriculturist* in 1842 with his brother, Richard L. Allen. Agricultural writer and implement manufacturer. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 1:185-86. In the *Cultivator*, June, 1840 (7:96), he made an amusing response to Robinson's article. See *post*, 138-39, for Robinson's description of the Berkshire hogs supplied by Allen.

[2] Caleb N. Bement, of Three Hills Farm, Albany. Born 1790; died at Poughkeepsie, New York, December 22, 1868. Agriculturist, inventor, publicist. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 2:172-73.

[3] The *Cultivator* for January, 1840 (7:12-14), contains "A Chapter on Swine" with illustrations that fully justify Robinson's feelings toward "alligators and landpikes."

[4] Robinson took an active part in the national election in 1840, supporting William Henry Harrison.

'Tis a happy idea. It will suit us here in the North, exactly. We could not attend in May, but in July, we WILL attend. I wish to alter the notice in one other respect—instead of the "young men's convention," let it be ALL men. Let the central committee officially invite our friends from Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, and Michigan, to join in the great festival. Let the officers and soldiers of the battle of Tippecanoe, be particularly invited to attend. Gentlemen I want to be there—I do not want my gray hairs to exclude me; for in this cause, I feel that I am still a "young man."

I shall go with my tent and camp equipage, prepared for a seige—and advise every one to do so, that can.

No doubt however that ample provision will be made for accommodation upon the ground. As the field is in the vicinity of Lafayette, there will be no trouble about subsistence. Come on then—come young—come old—come all. Let us have a national jubilee worthy the time, place, and occasion. Dont let us be out done by the Buckeyes. If they had 20,000 in their convention let us have 30,000. Let every "log cabin" in the state send at least one delegate to the "log cabin candidate's" convention.

Let us make it known abroad, that the Hoosiers, cannot, and will not be out done. Let us invite the Hero of Tippecanoe to be present.

Gentlemen, I am no "Bank Aristocrat," I am an humble occupant of a log cabin, and I have been all this day grubbing bushes; for notwithstanding I am an "office holder," I am not able to *Swartwout*[1] a *Price* from it sufficient to support all the occupants of my log Cabin.

LAKE C. H. March 30,

I have just returned from the Senatorial Convention, and notwithstanding rain and mud, the attendance was full of the most enthusiasticly devoted friends of Har-

[1] Samuel Swartwout was appointed collector of the port of New York by Andrew Jackson. He later defaulted and fled to Europe.

rison and reform.[1] The convention adjourned to meet *en massee* on the Tippecanoe battle ground—We were divided in opinion as to the most suitable day, whether on the 29th of May or 4th of July, but agreed unanimously to abide the decision of the Central committee, as to the most suitable day.

All are persuaded that the 4th of July is the best day, and the only fear is whether it would produce a greater meeting on that day or not. All are determined that, take place when it will, it shall be a meeting of *all men,* instead of a meeting of young men—And throughout the counties of La Porte, Porter and Lake, all are determined that Indiana shall beat Ohio—that the thousands upon the battle ground on the 29th of May or 4th of July, can, must, and *shall* exceed the thousands at the Ohio convention.

Young Men's Convention

[*Lafayette Free Press,* May 5, 1840]

Lake C. H., Ia. April 12, 1840.

Mr. J. D. Smith:—

Dear Sir—I see that the Central Committee of Tippecanoe County, have resolved to afford all the facillities in their power to accommodate the immense host, that will encamp on the Old Battle Ground the last of next month. I fear very much that you have no just conception of the numbers, that will be there.

From the best and most extended information that I can obtain, I cannot compute the number at less than 30,000.—From the north, we shall come pretty well prepared for the field.

I would suggest, however, one item to our friends in Tippecanoe, that would add greatly to the comfort of the camp, particularly if it should rain, and which can be

[1] Robinson was presiding officer at the convention which was held at Valparaiso on March 28. Packard, *History of La Porte County,* 210.

furnished with little or no expense if timely prepared. This is, an abundance of new *Straw*. I hope your Committee will urge on their farmer friends, to preserve and send in a supply.

I hope an abundance of grain and provisions will be upon the ground for sale. I suggest that you make an early publication that such will be the case.

I would also suggest, that the order of encampment should be marked out, and the programme published, and Marshals to attend to the arrangement.

This would afford convenient facillities for finding the delegations from different counties, and prevent any confusion.

I offer these suggestions, not in the spirit of dictation, but in the feeling of a most ardent devotion to the cause, and as hints that may enable your committee, to add greatly to to the comfort of those who may in a measure be considered in the light of guests of yours.

Tho' personally a stranger to you and the members of your committee, yet there are times which should make all the 'log cabin boys' feel like brothers, and as such with affectionate regard, I am most respectfully,

Your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

[1] After commenting on Robinson's valuable suggestions, the editor continued: "We are authorized by the Whig Central Committee of our county, to say that active and energetic measures are now in progress to secure, for those who may attend the Convention, as great an amount of comfort as practicable for so large an assemblage as may be expected on that occasion. The 'Log Cabin Boys' of our town have made arrangements to build . . . as early as the 15th inst., a huge 'Cabin' for a store house for provisions and baggage: and a committee . . . has been appointed to collect and store . . . such provisions and other necessaries as our citizens may see fit to contribute. And we have no doubt that the other suggestions of our 'Log Cabin' brother will be attended to by the Farmers of this and the adjoining counties. We know that they have an abundance, and to spare, of better provisions than it was possible to furnish to the soldiers in the campaign of 1811."

"OH! NEVER WILL THE BOYS FORGET
THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY—"

[Indianapolis *Semi-Weekly Journal*, May 12, 1840]

[May 12, 1840]

TUNE—*The Mariners Wife.*

Now we are sure the time is set,
And now we're sure we'll go,
Is this a time to feel regret,
For old Tippecanoe?
There'll be shouts and songs and glee,
There'll be luck for all,
There'll be happy times you'll see,
While rolling the ball.

Is this a time to feel regret,
When we are on the way?
Oh! never will the boys forget
The twenty-ningth of May
There'll be shouts, &c.

Rise up and buckle on your pack,
And saddle up your steed,
Let nothing now, the cause hold back,
Come meet us on the mead.
There'll be shouts, &c.

The Sailor he will bring his Brig,
The Printer too his Press,
And there'll be song and dance and jig,
In every kind of dress.
There'll be shouts, &c.

The farmer, he will bring his spade,
Mechanic's show their skill,
With emblems of their happy trade,
The Loco-foco's kill.
There'll be shouts, &c.

And there upon the battle field,
Will sound again the drum,
And there while high our shouts are peal'd,
Then may this song be sung.
There'll be shouts, &c.

And if the words you should forget
The poet he'll be there,
With other songs and tunes all set,
To while away dull care.
There'll be shouts, &c.

And while *he* lives, with songs and glee,
Will celebrate the day,
And while *we* live, remember'd be
The twenty-ninth of May.
There'll be shouts, &c.

FROM THE "LOG CABIN POET" OF NORTHEN INDIANA.

TOO LONG HAVE WE FELT THE SPOILERS POWER[1]—

[Ms. in H. A. Kellar Collection]

[May ?, 1840]

Blue bonnets o'er the border

Brave log cabin lads, arise to glory,
Now's the time your bonds to sever,
Subtreasuryism[2] yawns before ye,
Strike the blow, and 'twill die forever!
Let not those hireling bonds affright ye,
The day is ours, come pass the word around
Remember tis Harrison invites you,
To meet him on that "bloody battle ground"—

[1] It is possible that this was one of the campaign songs which were distributed at the Tippecanoe Battleground celebration of May 29. The Indianapolis *Spirit of '76*, June 6, 1840, in a long article describing the convention, devoted a paragraph to "LAKE County. The Boys of the North turned out nobly in response to the appeal of one of her citizens whom we observed in his wagon which contained the printing press of the "Great Western," busily engaged in distributing Harrison melodies, as they were rapidly struck from the press which was in constant motion. A banner also appeared—'*The log cabin boys of Lake County are coming.*'"

[2] Robinson refers to Andrew Jackson's attack on the United States Bank and the subsequent proposal to establish the subtreasury.

Too long have we felt "the spoiler's" power,
Too long have we bowed down to a master,
At length's arrived the trying hour,
To break our chains or rivet them faster—
Up, up and away, see the foe's around us,
Let all who loath the "specie order,"[1]
Come join our standard, our hope is boundless,
We'll send to the ranks of the foe, disorder—

The great Van Buren did boasting say,
That "in the footsteps of the hero he'd follow,"
Let his words prove true, and we'll help him on his way,
Till he rests in the dark region of "sleepy hollow"—
For Harrison the brave, the Cabin boys will go,
As men who for liberty fight in good order,
Our war cry, "the grave" or "our country we'll save,"
When we meet on the Tippecanoe border—

In treacherous hands our country has fallen,
The dark soul of Benton[2] has cause to repent it,
But to "expunge" them,[3] the people now call on,
The brave, the honor'd, the free, and true independant,
To rally around our "log cabin" standard,
And march to the battle in strength & in good order,
And play the rogue's march till we drive back the vanguard,
Of the Treasury plund'rers, far over the border—

[1] An order of secretary of the treasury, July 11, 1836, directed that payment for public lands (except in certain cases in Virginia) be made to government agents in gold and silver only.

[2] Thomas Hart Benton, born Hillsboro, North Carolina, March 14, 1782; died Washington, D. C., April 10, 1858. Senator from Missouri, 1821-1851, and representative, 1853-1855. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 2:210-13.

[3] This refers to a resolution introduced into the Senate by Benton to erase from the Journal the censure concerning the bank controversy passed by the Senate on Andrew Jackson, March 28, 1834. First introduced in 1834 and passed January 16, 1837.

"So Much for"—Berkshires.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:129; Aug., 1840[1]]

[July 6, 1840]

Friend Tucker[2]—You have probably judged from the tenor of some of my former communications, that we were cursed in this part of the country, with a species of wild animals, called hogs; and also of my intention to take some steps to convince my fellow-citizens, that they were entirely mistaken in the article. I am happy to state to you, that I have been eminently successful. The witnesses which I have introduced to prove my case, have, by a speaking, though dumb, eloquence, convinced the most sceptical.

In short, I received a few days since from A. B. Allen, Esq. of Buffalo, the first pair of Berkshire pigs ever seen in this country; and had I introduced an African lion, I verily believe it would not have excited more curiosity. They have been visited by hundreds, who had read the description and seen the picture of them, every one of whom believed it to be an overwrought description and picture; and every one of whom is now convinced, that "the half had not been told them." Were the pair that I have as prolific as a swarm of bees, I have already had more applications for pigs than I could supply.

This, sir, is the benefit of demonstrating to the eyes of the people the advantages of improvement in agriculture, in stocks and implements of husbandry. This is one of the fruits of agricultural journals. What a lesson may every day be learnt by examining these fruits. It is a lesson that should teach every philanthropic mind, how much good he may do his country by a little exertion to extend the reading of such journals, by the easy method which I have several times pointed out before.

And it is a positive duty that every friend to agricul-

[1] Part of this letter is quoted in an article on "Hogs," credited to the *Kentucky Farmer*, which appeared in Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 2:9-10 (October, 1840).

[2] Luther Tucker and Willis Gaylord began their joint editorship of the *Cultivator* in January, 1840, succeeding Judge Jesse Buel.

tural improvement, owes to himself and his country, to take immediate measures to introduce improved stock into his neighborhood.

Let those that are now able, set the example, and those that are less able will surely follow.

We are all creatures of example; influenced by the circumstances with which we are surrounded; and say what you will about "rich and poor," the poor look to the rich for example, and it is the positive duty of the rich to see that they have such examples as American freemen ought to follow. Reader! I speak now directly to you! Mark the fearful responsibility that I fix upon you! Let not another day pass over your head, till you inquire whether you are not able to extend the reading of an agricultural journal in your neighborhood? Is there not one poor laborer who would willingly work a day or two for you, if you would procure the paper for him? Are you not able to procure a pair of the improved breed of pigs, or some other stock, and introduce it into your neighborhood? You will soon see the leaven work; and it will do your heart good, to see the smiles and hear the congratulatory expressions that will welcome your efforts in a good cause.

Try it my friend; you never will curse the good advice of your old friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. July 6, 1840.

RUST[1] IN WHEAT.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:129; Aug., 1840]

[July 13, 1840]

Almost total failure of Crop in Northern Indiana and Illinois.

MESSRS. EDITORS—One month ago, could you have seen this fertile region of *too* rich land, you would have seen

[1] The origin of rust was long unknown. In recent years it has been discovered that it originates in a fungus attacking the leaves of the common barberry. This is now known to be the aecidiospore stage of the red and black rust (*Puccinia graminis*) found on wheat, oats, and other kinds of grain and also certain species of grasses.

the greatest prospect of a great wheat crop that you ever saw. But that short month has been a succession of warm showers and hot sun, and the most universal blight has fallen upon us that I ever saw or heard of. It is not a piece here and there, but it is everywhere. Thousands of acres will never be cut, and such as will be, will barely pay the cost. Some fields are already rotten and stinking. It is only here and there a field can be found that will afford seed. There is yet much old wheat in the country, or the prospect would be still more gloomy than it is.

All other crops hereabouts look well. We must eat corn dodger and potatoes, and drink "hard cider," and have hard times one year more.

In haste, I am your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. July 13, 1840.

TO WESTERN EMIGRANTS.[1]

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:162; Oct., 1840]

[August 20, 1840]

MESSRS. EDITORS—If many of the intelligent persons who emigrate from the Eastern States to the "Great West," could look a few years only into futurity, they would greatly profit by it, not only to themselves, but to the country. Will any of those who intend in future to emigrate, profit by the kind hint of a friend?

Instead, then, of bringing with you many cumbrous articles of furniture that will be almost useless in such a residence as you must necessarily inhabit in a new country; or at any rate, such as you can well dispense

[1] *The Emigrant's Complete Guide to the United States . . .*, 72 (London: William Strange; Leeds: Alice Mann, 1850), contains the following note: "Another excellent book on *Prairie Farming* is published by Solon Robinson, of Indiana, and also may be had at New York, on landing. It is entitled, *The Prairie Farmer.*" No copy of this work by Robinson has been located. It is likely that it consisted of reprints or a résumé of articles like the one published here, which first appeared in agricultural periodicals.

with in a "log cabin;" let me honestly advise you to bring the worth of it in "Berkshire pigs," "Durham bulls," "Leicester sheep," and *other improved machinery,* that will add much more to your wealth and comfort, than mahogany side-boards, tables and chairs, and gilt looking glasses. I do not object to these things in their proper places—but the place for them, is not in a house composed of rough logs, having the cracks between them "chinked" with rails, and "daubed" with mud; having a floor made of "puncheons," that is, plank split out of logs, the roof covered with "shakes," or "clapboards," about four feet long, laid upon round poles; the chimney built without stone, brick, or mason, composed of sticks and clay—the door of split boards, with wooden hinges and latch—for such are some of the "fixins" of a log cabin—and in such a dwelling-place has many a good family lived comfortably, contented, and happy, while earning the means to provide a better one—and in such an one has been many a good piece of furniture spoiled by an exposure, which such articles are not calculated to endure. Besides, such articles run much more risk of loss and damage on the passage than a cage of Berkshire pigs.

Let me earnestly advise every person intending to emigrate to the west, particularly the northern parts of Indiana and Illinois, to which water communication is so cheap, safe, and convenient, to dispose of all articles of luxury, that are unsuitable to the situations they will be likely to be placed in, for a few of the first years of their new habitation, and invest the proceeds in valuable stock, and improved farming implements, with a variety of the best seeds; and my word for it, they will find their account in it.

A word more, honestly spoken. Although the inhabitants of all new countries are anxious to see it settle fast, and urge their friends and acquaintance to "come west," without distinction, there are many that come who are entirely unfit for "new settlers." An able general selects

a *small* portion of a large army for pioneers, because of the peculiar fitness of that small part for that arduous and important service. It is my opinion, that a much smaller portion of the community are fit for pioneers in settling a new country. Too little heed has been paid to this important fact, in the great rush for the west, a few years past. Thousands have rushed forward with the bright vision of an "*el Dorado*" before them, to find nothing but disappointment, loss of property, vexation of mind, and consequent loss of health, and sometimes loss of life; all attributable to their own heedlessness, rushing headlong into a situation that nature, education, and habit, had totally unfitted them to occupy. Let not my western readers say, that I would discourage the settlement of the country; I always have, and always will, encourage the thousands who have, and who would better their situations, by emigrating from the old states to the west. But let every person disposed to emigrate, first seriously inquire whether he would better his situation or not. Let him lay open to himself, and more particularly to his wife and children, if such he have, a complete picture of the case; and don't let him forget to point out all the shades as well as bright spots in the picture. To a large portion of the new settlers of a new country, there is an indefinable charm in "making a beginning" in an uncultivated wilderness, and causing it to "blossom like the rose," that lends life a pleasure, and overbalances all difficulties.

Happiness, and not wealth, should be the aim of all; though no man should allow himself to be happy, without he is doing some good in the world—promoting the happiness of his fellow creatures, as well as himself. And to such dispositions only, will my present advice be availing; but to such, I hope it will avail so far as to make them inquire, when they are preparing to emigrate, whether they will not be likely to contribute to their own wealth and happiness, and that of their fellow creatures, by following some of my present advice.

I believe I could advise who would be likely to benefit themselves by emigration, but that would be advice thrown away. But I hope the advice to all emigrants, to bring with them some choice selections of stock, as the most profitable investment of money that they could make, will not be entirely lost.

Here is a vast country of the richest soil, not one-tenth part cultivated, forming a pasture for stock equal to your eastern clover fields, and susceptible of supporting immense herds, making tons of beef, butter, cheese, and pork, with small labor, and no interest upon the cost of valuable land. But we are lamentably deficient in stock; in half a dozen counties, there are not half a dozen pairs of Berkshire hogs. In fact, hereabouts is the *worst* breed of hogs I ever saw in any country. Sheep are of the coarse common kind, with no means of improving them; and although it is supposed by many, that sheep require a hilly country, I never saw sheep do better in any place than in this prairie country. But with a good breed, we also need a good breed of shepherd's dogs, for the prairie wolves are very troublesome. These are a species between the wolf and fox. They are somewhat larger than the largest kind of fox, and "bold as the devil." At this season of the year, the sheep need constant watching in the day time, and close yard at night. There are none or very few big wolves, or other troublesome animals. Sheep and cattle are easily wintered on native grass, and the country is entirely free from disease among flocks. If, then, men grow wealthy upon stock farms that are worth $100 an acre, what would we do here with the same kind of stock, where a man may get 80 acres for $100; with an unbounded range of common for pasturage? For dairy farms, a prairie country is remarkably fine; the native grass producing the richest kind of milk, and the fattest and richest beef I ever saw on grass alone. But of pork, I will only say that it cannot be made of the animals common to this country. Come, then, old and young, rich and poor, male and

female, all who sincerely believe after mature reflection, that you can better your condition by emigration, and you shall find a wide and fertile country; but be sure you bring every one of you, an improved pig, or sheep, or cattle, or plow, or other implement, and that you cultivate the soil in an improved manner, and you will improve yourselves and neighbors.

And now I hope you may improve by the advice of your old friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., Aug. 20, 1840.

RUST IN WHEAT, &c.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:163-64; Oct., 1840]

[August 20, 1840]

MESSRS. EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—In my hasty note of July 13th, published in the Cultivator this month, I gave no particulars—I had even forgot that I had written, until I read it in the paper, and also the excellent article upon the subject of rust in wheat. At the same time my attention was drawn to a new and singular theory of the *cause* of rust, published in the Laporte paper, which I have cut out and enclosed.* You will see by

* OUR WHEAT CROP.—This year is without a precedent in regard to the failure of our *wheat crop.* The committee which was selected to ascertain the probable number of acres of wheat growing in this county, reported that there were not less than 25,000. This estimate in my opinion, was not an exaggerated one. Now had this come in as well as we had anticipated or hoped, we should have had 500,000 bushels of wheat in our county; 100,000 bushels of this would have been sufficient for our seed and consumption, and the residue we might have disposed of. This at 50 cents per bushel, would have brought into our county $200,000. This sum would have liquidated an immense amount of debt; but owing to the *fly, army-worm* and *rust,* our wheat has been measurably destroyed; and in lieu of our having five hundred thousand bushels, we shall not have one hundred thousand, and this will be of a very inferior quality. So it will readily be perceived that we have sustained a very considerable loss. It is *natural* for us to inquire into the *cause* of this stupendous failure. *My* views on this subject were published in the Laporte "Herald" last summer. I shall therefore merely *reiterate* them. That the fly was the *cause*

that what an immense crop was on the ground in that single county; in a county too, that the land was purchased of the Indians in 1832.

Some of the best fields have been cut, but the grain is poor stuff. Some of it does not weigh more than 30 lbs. to the bushel. I have correct information 150 miles south and 100 miles wide, east and west, all of which is a most fertile wheat soil, and immense crops were on the ground, and almost entirely blasted. There are, however, some good crops of spring wheat, though very little of it *improved* kinds.

This is certainly the greatest loss by rust that I was ever acquainted with. And in all this vast extent, I don't think there is a barberry bush. So that is not the cause. That the fly is the cause, as advanced by the Laporte writer is something new, and I must doubt the correctness of the theory.

But what is the cause? There is one fact worth noticing, that fields situated in places sheltered by woodland suffered least. And even by the side of fences, where in the fore part of summer the wheat was the most rank and luxuriant, it was much better than in the middle of the field. Why was it so? Was it not owing to the more rapid growth in June, of that which was the most back-

of the rust in our wheat this year, I do not entertain a doubt. I have examined my own, and divers of my neighbors' stubble fields very faithfully, and the conclusion to which I have come is, that every spear of wheat in which the fly deposited its nit, last fall, was killed. They survived until the warm weather ensued in the spring, when they died. From this bunch of dead wheat, there sprang up *new* shoots or stalks, in like manner as they would come up around the trunk of a sapling which had been girdled. I have enumerated as many as 20 dead spears in one bunch. Now, for the wherefores of the rust. These new shoots came forward with amazing rapidity; consequently they accumulate an undue quantity of sap; and the stalks having more juice than it was possible for them to retain, and the extension became so great, that the sap was forced out at the spiricle or pores; the premature death of the stalk ensued and a consequent shrinking of the berry. This juice or sap being of a glutinous substance, adhered to the surface of the stalk and became a kind of rust.—*Laporte Whig.*

ward in May? The weather was very *"muggy,"* and the wheat grew uncommonly fast, so much so that the common expression among those not well acquainted with the theory of rust, said that "the stalks grew so fast that they bursted and let out the juice and that turned to a red mould," &c.—and the same thing appears to be advanced by the writer of the enclosed article.

It is an important inquiry, "what is the *cause of* rust in wheat?" But a much more important inquiry, "what can be done to prevent it?"

More than a million of dollars is lost to the cultivators in this rusty district, by this calamity. If you or your correspondents can offer advice as to how to guard against a future loss, it will be highly acceptable.

Most respectfully your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTE.—My young Berkshires continue to improve and excite as much curiosity as ever. It is a good evidence of a disposition among the people toward improvement, to see their curiosity excited by good stock when introduced to their notice.

Lake Court House, Ia. Aug. 20, 1840.

TO WESTERN EMIGRANTS—NO. 2.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 7:192; Dec., 1840]

[October 20, 1840]

MESSRS. EDITORS—Since reading my first article of advice to emigrants, I have concluded to risk throwing away a little more advice, and shall endeavor to point out "who would be likely to benefit themselves by emigration."[1]

[1] There is a marked similarity between Robinson's views on immigration to the West, as expressed here and in his articles of November 1 and December 9, 1842, "To Western Emigrants," and the views of Jacob Schramm, a German immigrant to Indiana in 1835. See Vonnegut, Emma S. (ed.), *The Schramm Letters, written by Jacob Schramm and members of his family from Indiana to Germany in the year 1836*, 281-83 (*Indiana Historical Society Publications*, 11:no. 4, Indianapolis, 1935).

Young hearty men, married or single, mechanics, or laborers in agricultural employments, who with an untiring industry are unable to "get ahead in the world," if they emigrate to the west, and pursue the same industrious course, will find their situation improved by the change. But let no one come here with the expectation of finding wages higher, provisions low, land so cheap that he can get an 80 acre *farm* for $100, and consequently that he will be able to acquire an independence with little or no exertion on his own part. True, land is cheap—it is hardly possible to imagine a soil more rich, but land bought of the United States at $1,25 an acre, is not a cultivated farm.

And although it is easy to bring dry prairie land into cultivation, it requires a persevering industry on the part of the settler, sometimes accompanied with great privations and hardships for himself and family; and in this case, "a bad beginning" does not "make a good ending."

Thousands, who were "well to do in the world," in the eastern States, and who on an old improved farm would have continued "well to do," have had their minds highly excited by overwrought pictures of "a paradise of a place" in the west, and without stopping to inquire whether they were fit for pioneers, have rushed upon the shipwreck of their hopes, health and happiness of themselves and families.

Upon the other hand, thousands are toiling from year to year as tenants or owners of some barren little spot, who might with similar industry in this country, become large and wealthy farmers. For what their own little farm or other spare property would sell for where they are, they might procure a farm for themselves and each child around them. A farm, did I say? No, not a farm, only the raw material out of which to manufacture one, by long and constant toil. But then that toil is cheered and supported by the constant exciting pleasure that an industrious man always feels while "making improvements," while creating new things. But I have known

many emigrants to this country, who were totally incapable of making the necessary improvements to render themselves comfortable, and after a few months of vexation and trouble, after exhausting almost everything they possessed, have returned to the place from whence they came, to curse the country and discourage others from emigrating, who under the same circumstances, would have laid the foundation of a fortune for themselves and children. Had some of these disappointed seekers after the paradise of their distorted vision, first inquired whether they were at all fitted to perform the pioneer duty of a new settlement, they might have saved themselves much money and vexation. Let the emigrating disposed person, then seriously inquire whether he is going to benefit himself or not; above all things, let the wife and daughters know what they have to go through in a new country. I have known some that have come to the west with high wrought fancies of romantic felicities, who have removed to weep with bitter disappointment; such do not make happy, contented, good citizens. But had they "known the worst at first," they would have met it with fortitude; and enjoyed life in a log cabin, better, perhaps, than they had formerly done in a large mansion house.

Let those who are unwilling or unable to bear hardship, or who are unwilling to humble themselves to a residence in a log cabin, remain where they are a little longer. The west is no place for pride or laziness; we want industrious farmers and mechanics; we don't care how poor a man is, if he is industrious, he cannot remain poor. We are also glad to see the wealthy come too, particularly when he brings along a lot of choice stock, as many of late do.

There is one more class of inhabitants that we need; that is, able and efficient teachers of common schools. It is one of the difficulties that all new countries labor under, the want of good schools. Dollars and cents are of so much more importance to many men, than the edu-

cation of their children, that they are unwilling to incur any extra expense; and in many cases, the difficulty of obtaining a teacher without taking any trouble, keeps a neighborhood destitute of a school for a whole season.

But enough at present; in my next, I have some idea of drawing a picture of "making a new settlement in the west," for the amusement of emigrants, or those that intend to be such. Your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court House, Ia., Oct. 20, 1840.

TO WESTERN EMIGRANTS—NO. 3.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:19-20; Jan., 1841]

[November 1, 1840]

First Night on the Prairie.

MESSRS. EDITORS—In my last I proposed to give some account of the manner of making a new settlement. Although the subject is not exactly such an one as is calculated to add to the knowledge of those who are seeking for something new in agriculture, it may be one from which a numerous class of your readers may gather something new to them, and I hope sufficiently interesting to add to their amusement of a long winter evening. And that, you know, is a strong inducement towards causing many to read; and that should always be a prominent object, to make a paper amusing as well as useful,—in fact the two should be constantly blended. The most useful articles are too often too dry to attract the attention of the hard laboring man. An occasional article then, which will amuse as well as instruct, and which will tend to "lighten labor" by adding an hour of enjoyment to the toil-worn laborer, will certainly have answered a good end—such is my present purpose—but if you consider it out of character for your journal, you know how to dispose of it without giving offence to a real friend. But to those who intend to set their faces westward, I think an old settler's experience will be interesting. I will begin with the FIRST NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE.

It was the last day of October 1834, when I first entered this "arm of the Grand Prairie." [1] It was about noon of a clear delightful day when we emerged from the wood, and for miles around, stretched forth one broad expanse of clear, open land. At that time the whole of this country scarcely showed a sign that the white man had yet been here, except those of my own household. I stood alone, wrapt up in that peculiar sensation that man only feels when beholding a broad rolling prairie for the first time—it is an indescribable delightful feeling. Oh what a rich mine of wealth lay outstretched before me. Some ten miles away to the south-west, the tops of a grove were visible—toward that, onward rolled the wagons, with nothing to impede them—the road was broad—the grass (which some think grows so high as to impede travel,) only a few inches long, except in creeks and wet places. Just before sundown we reached the grove and pitched our tent by the side of a spring. What could exceed the beauty of this spot! Why should we seek farther? Here is every thing to indicate a healthy location, which should always influence the new settler. And here let me caution the emigrant always to beware locating upon the banks of streams. After enjoying such a night of rest as can only be enjoyed after such a day, the morning helped to confirm us that here should be our resting place. In a few hours the grove resounded with the blows of the axe, and in four days we moved into our "new house."

"Dear me," do I hear some parlor-loving wife of an expectant emigrant say, "where did you get your boards to build it with?" My good lady, we were 40 miles from a saw-mill, and of course the house was built and finished off complete without a sawed board about it, and but very few nails, nor a brick or stone. The sides were round rough logs, not even the bark taken off, laid up by notching the corners together, the cracks well filled with clay,

[1] Grand Prairie was located south of the Kankakee marsh and timberland in what is now part of Newton and Jasper counties.

the chimney all clay and sticks; the roof, floors, and door, all made of split boards, and the tables, bedsteads, and cupboards, all of the same materials.

"Oh dear! I never will go to the west, if I have got to live in such a house as that. Why, it ain't as good as our hog-pen—and only one room!"

No mam, only one room—and we were very glad to get that just as winter was setting in upon us, 15 miles from neighbors, 40 miles from mill, store, farm, or post office. One room 16 feet square, in which have lodged 16 persons, other emigrants like ourselves, night overtaken in winter, without other shelter, and in which my family spent a happier winter than I ever expect to see again. And although not as costly, madam, as your aristocratic hog pen, yet I can assure you, that even you *could* live comfortable in such a house, and if you come to the west, as you are now thinking of, you will be very likely to live in a similar one—and you will be very comfortable too, and if I should happen to call on you, you must not think you could not make me comfortable too, although you had but "one room."

"No neighbors—so lonely"—do you say. No, I assure you, we were not lonely—never less so than that winter. In the first place, there is a dozen "honey-trees" to be cut and taken care of, and as there is no fruit nor vegetables, the deficiency is to be made up with cranberries. Then there is the venison, geese, ducks, grouse, quails, and squirrels, &c., to dress and eat; and once in five or six weeks we had "the news" from the post-office. There was no lack of employment in doors or out—no loneliness—no repining. We all came here with a full knowledge of what we had to do and expect, and so there was no disappointment.

And my dear reader, when you come to the west, don't expect too much; humble yourself to new and strange things that your new circumstances will induce. And take my advice, if you cannot humble yourself to make a beginning in a humble log cabin, you had better wait

where you are, until some better pioneer has made a beginning for you. Don't come here to be miserable, for generally we are a happy race, "full, fat, and saucy;" and some of us, after we have got a "good beginning," get a little lazy. Corn and hogs will grow without much work, and "hog and hominy" will support life; and "who would work when he was able to do without it?" If you answer that you would, and that you and your family can "make a beginning" in a log cabin, you may start for the west. But don't forget the advice I gave you in my first number, and don't forget your well meaning old friend "the squatter."

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., Nov. 1, 1840.

"AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE,"

"To elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil."

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:33-34; Feb., 1841]

[December 27, 1840]

MESSRS. GAYLORD[1] & TUCKER—My worthy friends—You and many of your readers, will recollect the article published in No. 3, vol. 5, May, 1838, upon this subject.[2] It was designed to call the attention of the public to the subject, and Judge Buel, in a note says—*"Mr. Robinson's proposition meets our hearty approbation; and should it be favorably responded to by our cotemporaries who conduct agricultural journals, and whose opinions upon the subject we respectfully solicit,—we shall give it our cordial support,—and devise some means if others do not do it, to organize an association,"* for one of the noblest

[1] Willis Gaylord, born Bristol, Connecticut, in 1792; died at Camillus, New York, March 27, 1844. Agricultural editor and writer. Associated with Luther Tucker as joint editor of the *Cultivator*, 1840-1844. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 7:199-200.

[2] *Ante*, 87-90.

purposes ever devised, having in view the sole object "TO ELEVATE THE CHARACTER AND STANDING OF THE CULTIVATORS OF THE AMERICAN SOIL."

Well, so far as I am able to judge, the proposition met with an almost universal approbation. The article was extensively published in the papers of the country. The comments of many editors were highly flattering. From the tone of the press, and numerous private letters, I felt strongly encouraged that this great beneficial project to this nation was about to be accomplished. I pictured to myself one of our happy meetings, when the friends of agricultural improvement from every State, county and principal town in the United States, should be joyfully interchanging heartfelt greetings with each other—not only exchanging sentiments, but valuable information, rare and curious productions of nature, and valuable seeds—storing up in our minds a fund of happiness for all our after life. But alas, that one year has gone, and another is fast going, and not one mighty spirit has stepped forward to say this thing *can*, this thing MUST, this thing SHALL, be done. Even the encouraging echoes that responded from all parts of the Union to the first proposition, have died away, until not one faint echo meets my ear. Shall I despair to wake them again, under such discouraging circumstances? No —I am well aware that the whole energy of the public mind, has lately been engrossed by another and exciting subject.[1] But now there is a calm, there is room,—room to do good—and should I meet with one single echo to my second attempt to awake the public to the importance of this great proposition, that will some day assuredly shower blessings upon this agricultural nation, I shall not feel as though I had written in vain.

Messrs. Editors, let me reiterate my first text—"something *can*, something MUST, something SHALL," may I add, something *will* be done, and that speedily, "to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the

[1] The presidential campaign of 1840.

American soil;" for such is the object and aim of the "American Society of Agriculture,"—"as I understand it." * * * *

An oasis in a desert! Not with greater pleasure did ever weary traveler over burning sands, meet with an oasis, a bright, green, shady spot, abounding in cool springs, than I met with the letter of that good old Virginian, in your last number, just as I had written thus far. His invocation shall not be entirely in vain—I will "once more sound my trumpet," and before the echoes die away, I will sound it again and again, until its blast shall wake up "all the true lovers of American Husbandry, to a cordial coöperation in the promotion of a project, which I verily believe, if once achieved, would become more and more popular with the American people, in all time to come."

How true it is, my worthy friends, that "the bonds of that cordial brotherhood which should forever unite us, would be strengthened, by annually bringing together the distant members of our great agricultural family." How much they have already been strengthened through the columns of agricultural papers. How does my heart yearn to take that good man by the hand whose letter I have just been reading, and am now commenting upon. There is no kinsman among my numerous clan, whom I would sooner meet, or from whom I should expect a warmer welcome, than from such a man, as his writings indicate JAMES M. GARNETT to be.[1] If the perusal of a letter from a stranger produces such feelings, surely "our bonds of brotherhood would be strengthened," by a closer communion. This alone should be cause sufficient

[1] Garnett's letter of November 9, 1840, to which Robinson refers, appeared in the *Cultivator*, 7:190 (December, 1840). James Mercer Garnett was born on June 8, 1770, in Essex County, Virginia, and died April 23, 1843. He was a member of Congress, an agricultural writer, and a promoter of agricultural societies. He served as first president of the National Agricultural Society, 1841. He established a girls' school and was active in educational improvement. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 7:156-57.

to encourage us to persevere in the formation of a National Society.

How to begin, is the only obstacle. I disagree with Mr. Garnett, about looking to members of Congress to make an organization; they never would do it. How then shall we begin? We need not wait for a farther expression of public sentiment; for as Mr. Garnett says, "the project received such high commendation throughout the country," it is evidence to my mind that the majority are in favor of its "speedy execution." Thus, then, let the *beginning* be. I will take the responsibility to order it, and you, gentlemen, must endorse it, or suggest a better one. You must name a committee of 20 of the most active friends of the cause in the vicinity of Albany, to meet at your office on that memorable day, the birthday of Washington, to nominate the officers *pro. tem.* of the American Society of Agriculture; such committee *will not* fail to attend. Such men as they will nominate for officers, will not refuse to act. These officers, so far as may be convenient, by meeting, and otherwise by correspondence, will organize the Society. They will draft a "bond of union," and bye-laws for the orderly conducting meetings and uniting members. They will fix upon a time and place for the *first meeting*, and publish an invitation to all the friends of agriculture to meet. At that meeting, a constitution would be adopted, and officers elected.

The residence of the first officers is not important, so they are men who will lend their energies to put the ball in motion, for once in motion, it will never cease to roll. Each one should be immediately apprised by the nominating committee, of the appointments, and in his turn should accept the appointment, that it might be published. A small fund will be necessary to defray postage and printing expenses; and as soon as the treasurer is appointed, I shall forward ten dollars as a contribution, and I hope a few others will do likewise. If you, or any of your readers have aught to say against this plan of

organization, say it now or never. But above all things, let my friends Gaylord & Tucker, bear the fact in mind, that the whole responsibility now rests upon them to make a beginning of the organization. Let them not shrink from the honorable responsibility with which I have autocratically invested them; but proceed at once to name and publish the names of the committee, including themselves.[1]

When the officers are nominated, should they fail to perform their duty, they must expect to hear loud blasts from the trumpet of friend Garnett, and your most humble, though devoted friend of American agriculture.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., Dec. 27, 1840.

NOTE.—Information—Many persons having read my communications, have written to me private letters, and often taxed themselves with postage. To persons so disposed, I would say, that I do at present, and have for many years past, held the office of Post Master.

TO WESTERN EMIGRANTS—NO. 4.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:53; Mar., 1841]

[January 28, 1841]

MESSRS. EDITORS—By sundry assurances from unknown friends, that my articles have answered some of the purposes for which they were written, I am encouraged to continue. Even if they did no other good than to be the moving cause of bringing "two Durham cows" from my native state of Connecticut, to feed upon our boundless pastures, I should be satisfied. I hope Mr. Allen will give the required information, as to cost of freight, &c. And here I will take the liberty of saying to all persons desiring information connected with the

[1] Gaylord and Tucker declined to assume the responsibility assigned here, on the ground that there was not yet sufficient interest to make such a movement successful. *Cultivator*, 8:27 (February, 1841). See also their editorials in the April issue (8:57), and June issue (8:89).

great cause of improvement in agriculture, upon any branch within the extensive knowledge of A. B. ALLEN, or his brother, R. L. ALLEN,[1] of Buffalo, that they have but to ask, and they will receive. If they wish similar information from Chicago, address JOHN S. WRIGHT,[2] Esq. Editor of the "Union Agriculturist."

No emigrant need fear any difficulty in bringing along cattle and hogs. Several of the masters of steamboats on the Lakes, seem to take great interest in the shipment of choice stock to the West. I have had three lots of pigs, shipped from Buffalo to Chicago during the last summer, in the sole care of the master of the boats, and from the appearance of the pigs on arrival, they must have been treated like cabin passengers. In fact, none but a brute could maltreat a Berkshire pig.

In the shipment of furniture, emigrants need advice. Great care should be taken in packing everything in the most compact manner, in barrels and boxes, strongly hooped and nailed; and very plainly marked with full directions. The freight upon the canal is charged by the pound. Upon the Lake, and upon storage in ware-houses, it is charged by the *barrel bulk*. The best way is to contract in New-York or Albany, for the whole charge of

[1] Richard Lamb Allen, born in Westfield, Massachusetts, October 20, 1803; died September 22, 1869. Agricultural editor and manufacturer of farm implements. Wrote a number of agricultural books. Brother of A. B. Allen and L. F. Allen. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 1:205-6.

[2] John Stephen Wright, born July 16, 1815, at Sheffield, Massachusetts; died at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 16, 1874. Agricultural editor and manufacturer of farm-implement machinery. Selected as editor of the *Union Agriculturist*, founded by the Union Agricultural Society in 1840. Several years later Wright purchased the periodical from the society, and changed its name to the *Prairie Farmer*. This magazine is still published at Chicago. Wright was much interested in educational matters and in the expansion of trade and commerce in Chicago. He was an influential figure in the Middle West for many years. A sketch of Wright is to appear in a forthcoming volume of the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

transportation clear through, and pay it, and take a receipt, specifying the contract completely. If you have a family, you will have enough to look after, without watching your freight all the journey. Many articles are lost, through the carlessness of the owners. Articles are sold every year in Chicago, "for freight and charges," that never had any mark upon them of owner's name or destination. You cannot be too careful. Be economical, prudent and good natured upon your journey. Avoid haste and hasty words, although often provoked, and be determined to have a pleasant journey, and my word for it, you will have. And at whatever sacrifice, be sure to settle all your business before you start. For I have found out that "money to come from the East," is a very snail of a traveler; it but rarely overtakes the emigrant; and as for "going back after money," you can earn two new dollars here while you can hunt up one old one there.

If it be possible, always fix upon some definite spot for your location before you start—and when you arrive in a new settlement, *beware of sharks.* Be careful to settle in a healthy spot, although the soil should be less rich. Nothing disheartens the new settler so much as a season of sickness in the first year; and it is often brought on by great imprudence.

One prevailing fault among new settlers, is undertaking too much the first years. I have known many to completely prostrate themselves in a vain endeavor to fence and cultivate forty acres with strength only sufficient for ten, and after months of toil, finally compelled to witness the destruction of the whole crop, in consequence of their inability to "finish the fence." Not only the loss of crop, but a severe fit of sickness, brought on by over-exertion and exposure. For probably, while toiling at the field, the finishing of the house has been put off, and at last when placed in a situation to require a comfortable shelter from storms and winds, there is nothing of the kind. I have personally known much suffering, and sometimes death, to arise from such circumstances.

How much better to make a small beginning. To be sure and make the cabin as comfortable as possible, for at the best, it is to a family that have never been used to the like, but a temporary convenience, generally occupied more through necessity than choice. Not but that a *log house* can be made most completely comfortably, and I have often seen those of a very rough exterior, which showed the highest degree of neatness within. But there is such an anxiety among many emigrants to get a large farm, that the dwelling is neglected. This is all wrong; it is much better to have a "*little* land well tilled," and a house, if not "well filled" inside, at least have all the cracks in the outside well filled, if you expect to keep the wife, 'well willed." Many an ague fit is brought upon the new settler by the unusual exposure to which they subject themselves in an unfinished log cabin, with all the cracks open, perhaps without door or window, and but half a chimney, and sometimes without floor or fire-place.

Such a change from all former usage cannot be submitted to with impunity, although in the summer time, and though it be merely for that indefinite period, " 'til I get over my hurry." The fact is that an industrious man upon a new place, where everything is to be created by the work of his own hands before it can be called a *farm,* is never over his hurry. And I am sure that I shall have all the female part of my emigrating friends upon my side, when I insist that it should always be the first thing to do, as I am sure it is the first *duty* of the emigrant, to make the dwelling house as comfortable as the circumstances will possibly admit. If a man will expose his own health, he is bound by the strongest ties to protect that of his wife and children at all times, and doubly so, when he has brought them away from the thousand comforts that they have been reared to, "to begin a new home in the wilderness." And although the new settler's log cabin is necessarily a rough uncouth looking dwelling, it can with a very small amount of labor, be made tight, warm, comfortable and pleasant.

How many of my readers now dwelling in their handsome mansion houses, will, as they peruse this, look back to the positive happy days that they enjoyed in a log cabin.

That many of their descendants who are disposed to partake of the bounties that nature has provided for the industrious man in the Great West, will yet enjoy life in the same kind of humble habitation, is the sincere wish of their humble log cabin friend. SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. Jan. 28, 1841.

TO WESTERN EMIGRANTS—NO. 5.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:97; June, 1841]

[February 1, 1841]

THE FIRST TRIP TO MILL—THE EMIGRANT'S FAMILY OUT OF PROVISIONS—A LOG CABIN SCENE.

MESSRS. EDITORS—And you my kind readers, who have read my previous numbers, if you think I am becoming prolix, lay the present one aside. I was led away in my last number from the subject which I was prosing upon in No. 3.[1] I told you of the first night on the prairie, but I have not yet told you of many other nights and sunny days that I have spent here. The month of November, around the head of Lake Michigan, (which is in lat. 41, 38,) is usually a mild pleasant month. Such was the month that followed "the first night on the prairie." This was indeed propitious to the newly arrived emigrants, for there was much to do to prepare for the expected rigors of an approaching northern winter.

There was neither hay nor grain within many a long mile, for man or beast, and to one accustomed to look upon the gloomy side of things, the prospect of making a new settlement under such circumstances would have looked gloomy enough. But an emigrant to the West should not be one of that cast of temper. He should be

[1] The two articles are printed *ante*, 149 ff., 156 ff.

able to look beyond the many discouraging circumstances attending the beginning of his new mode of life, to the bright prospect of the future. There was but one fleeting moment of gloom resting with me during the first winter. The first month had been spent in the numerous duties of preparation for winter, and the beautiful sunny days of November had given place to cold and snowy December, when it became apparent that the little magazine of provisions must be replenished, and that right speedily. And although "delays are dangerous," yet, waiting better weather, delay was made to that point, that upon calculation proved the stock on hand barely sufficient to supply the five or six days that it would take to make the journey where a supply could be obtained, and return again while there was yet a little left. So a trusty and persevering messenger was dispatched, with due, though little needed caution, to hasten his return. The weather again was mild and pleasant, and our spirits all buoyant and bright as the winter sunshine, as the cheerful cheering notes of the departing teamster's joyous morning song floated away upon the breeze, that swept unobstructed over miles of prairie, now blackened by the annual fires, to a somber hue, and cheerless winter aspect.

Never were such appetites seen before, as those which daily diminished the fast failing stock of provisions of our little family in the wilderness. Before them I kept a cheerful face, but oh, how my heart sunk within me on the evening of the fifth day, as I descended from a tall tree which I had climbed to try to discover the expected team. For I easily perceived that the weather had been such as to ice over the unbridged streams, though I feared not sufficient to pass over a wagon. On this evening, too, I was still further pained by the arrival of some hungry wanderers, to whom hospitality could not be denied.

On the sixth day, the only neighbor within a dozen miles, came to *borrow a little meal.* He looked upon the

bottom of the empty barrel and turned homeward with his empty bag. The knife had scraped the last bone for breakfast, and the next resource was a small bag of wheat bran, which made very palatable batter (not better) cakes, though they would have been better, but that the lard was gone, and butter was, in those days, among the unknown things. Bran cakes and cranberries, sweetened with honey, then were sweet diet. Although the owner of a gun that rarely failed to perform good service, it seemed that every living thing in the shape of game had hid up in winter quarters. 'Tis true, that I suffered a degree of nervousness, that might have rendered my hand too unsteady to endanger the life of game, if it had come in the way; not that I heard one word of repining or fear, nor that there was any immediate danger of actual starvation; yet the thought was not a pleasant one, to think I had brought a wife and children into a wilderness to suffer, even through fear of want.

On the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth days, anxious and watchful eyes scanned the prairie by day, and tended beacon fires by night, for this precaution was necessary, as there was nothing to guide the expected teamster home, should he undertake the perilous passage of the prairie just at night fall. It was about midnight of the last day, and I had tired of watching, and had lain down, but not to sleep. The question of "what is to be done?" was working up some horrid visions before me, when my ear, which had grown remarkable quick of late, caught a faint sound like steps upon the frozen ground. Sentinel upon his post never started quicker than I. The sounds grew more and more perceptible, but there was nothing like the rumbling of wheels. For the first time, then, did the deep seated anxiety of the good wife and mother show itself. Hope was fast sinking, when the well-known voice of the ever cheerful teamster was borne along the midnight air. How little do we know how to appreciate trifles, until placed in trying situations. What joyful sounds! But the joy was soon damped, as it be-

came manifest that he drove a team without a wagon. Where was that? was the first question. "Fast in the river, a few miles back on the prairie." "Do you know we have nothing in the house for your supper?" "I expected so, and so I brought along a bagful; here is both flour and meat."

Reader, can you imagine yourself for one moment in my situation? Can you realize that the happiness of that moment was sufficient to pay for many weary, watchful days of anxiety? No, you cannot realize that, until experience teaches you. Happiness is only realized by contrast with misery. And it is because the emigrant's life is full of such exciting scenes, and because the days of pleasure are long remembered, when those of pain are buried in oblivion, that induces thousands annually to add themselves to that irresistible wave of western emigration, that is rolling onward to the Pacific Ocean.

The happiness of the teamster too, was such as he will never forget. For he had endured a night of actual peril. When the ice gave way under the wagon, it became necessary for him to plunge into the water to extricate the team, and when he reached the lone log cabin, his outer garments were frozen stiff, and in a short time he would have become an immoveable mass of ice, and perhaps have sunk to his final rest upon the bleak prairie.

Those who have seen a real log cabin fire of hickory logs, may picture to themselves a scene in the first cabin of the first settler, in the first winter on the prairie; and those who have never seen such a scene of real comfort, must imagine as best they can, a picture of such a scene as was realized in that cabin on the night of the return from "the first trip to mill."

Such scenes of excitement, of pain and pleasure, often occur to the western emigrant. I have in memory's store many that may or may not yet be told; but for the present, I will leave those who have perused this, with the sincere wish that they may ever enjoy their fast fleeting moments of life in a splendid mansion, with as great a

zest, as a portion of life has been enjoyed in a log cabin, by their old friend,

Lake C. H., Ia., February 1, 1841. SOLON ROBINSON.

"AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE."

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:65; Apr., 1841]

[February 18, 1841]

MESSRS. GAYLORD & TUCKER—The February number of the Cultivator is before me, and I have read your reasons for "declining to assume the responsibility which your friends had assigned you, at least, for the present."

I am willing, and do freely acknowledge, that your means of information are such as to enable you to come to a more calm conclusion upon the subject than I can, and perhaps your reasons are cogent, though I hope not conclusive, to all the friends of a National Society. I cannot regret the conclusion that you have come to, for it is the very one to cause the matter to be discussed; and the case is of that importance, that it should not be acted upon rashly. I am ready to admit, "that a failure would be a serious calamity;" but I am not ready to admit, or even believe that there are so few "men of public spirit, friends to agriculture, and alive to the interest, prosperity, and honor of the country," as you seem to fear. I believe that there are at this time "*enough* of such men to be found," who, notwithstanding they are "widespread," from "Maine to Georgia," would lend sufficient energies "to render such an enterprise certain of success."

I am happy to see you admit the utility of such a society—in fact, I don't know that that is denied or doubted by any one—the only point at issue, then, is, as to the proper time to commence the organization. This, then, is the sole question for the friends of the cause to answer: *Shall the organization of a National American Society of Agriculture, be undertaken in the year* 1841?

Readers, correspondents, friends of the project, one and all, speak, yea or nay. If the answer be in the

affirmative, I will show you ways and means to "set the ball in motion." The thing *can*, if you say it MUST, it SHALL be done. But remember that the worthy editors of this paper are doubtful of the feasibility of the undertaking, and their opinion is entitled to consideration; but if we conclude to "soberly rely upon ourselves, and our own resources," and are likely to succeed, they will come to our aid with the power of Hercules; and so will the editor of every agricultural journal in the Union—so will every legislator, for the project will be "popular." No doubt your correspondent speaks truly when he says, "if we are to have a National, or American Society of Agriculture, it must be got up by farmers themselves." Shall we, the present generation, have it—shall the ardent and devoted friends of a cause that seeks *"to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil,"* have an opportunity of meeting one another, upon a spot so consecrated as that will be, where such an union of hands and hearts would take place. How ardently do I long to see such a meeting of such men as will compose such a society. Such a meeting will, sooner or later, take place, for it is the nature, disposition and education of the people of this country, to assemble together to discuss important questions. Is any question now before the people, so important as improvement in agriculture? Does not the wonderful extension of the number and circulation of agricultural journals, show that the public mind is deeply agitated upon the subject.

And now friend GARNETT, what say you?[1] What says old Virginia? What says old Kentuck, through friend STEVENSON,[2] of the Kentueky Farmer? And upon "sober

[1] Garnett, in a letter of February 17, 1841, to Robinson, printed in the March issue of the *Cultivator* (8:48), condoled with him over the refusal of Gaylord and Tucker to sponsor the move for a national organization, and proposed a new scheme for starting the society.

[2] Thomas B. Stevenson, born 1803; died 1863. Agricultural writer and speaker of great power. Editor of the *Franklin Farmer*, later the *Kentucky Farmer*, Frankfort, Kentucky, and

second thought," what say Messrs. GAYLORD & TUCKER? If monthly "agricultural soiries" are so pleasant and useful, how much more so would be a grand *National Concert.*[1]

And with anxious hopes to live to be one of the performers at that "concert," I remain an unwavering friend to speedy action, and yours, with respect and esteem,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. Feb. 18, 1841.

"NATIONAL AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE."

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 1:19-20; Mar., 1841]

[February 19, 1841]

JOHN S. WRIGHT Esq.—Dear Sir. You will see by the Feb. No. of the Cultivator, that the subject of the formation of such a society, is again under discussion.[2] You will probably recollect that my first article upon the subject, published in May 1838,[3] met with much approbation. The late political storm having subsided, I felt that *now* was a proper time to commence the organization of a society, the object of which should be, by forming "a bond of brotherhood among all the friends of agriculture throug-out the United States," *"to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil."*

You will see also, that the respected editors of the Cultivator, admit the utility of such a society, but express

of several newspapers, notably, the Cincinnati *Atlas* and Cincinnati *Chronicle*. See *Collins' Historical Sketches of Kentucky*, 2:561 (Collins & Co., Covington, Ky., 1874). He favored the formation of a national agricultural organization. *Kentucky Farmer*, 4:204-5 (March 20, 1841).

[1] The February *Cultivator* (8:29), contained an editorial under the heading "Agricultural Soiree," listing Robinson and other popular agricultural writers, and pointing out that their writings were equivalent to a monthly meeting of agriculturists, and were, moreover, open to all subscribers, no matter how separated by distance.

[2] See *ante*, 152-56.

[3] See *ante*, 87-90.

fears that the time has not yet come to commence the organization—that the friends of the measure are so wide spread, that there would be a fear of failure of being able to bring the friends of the measure together to form an association 'worthy of the name and object.' You will see that the great benefits likely to result from the formation of a National Society, are admitted by all, and that the point at issue is, when is the proper time to commence.

Many of the friends of the project are in favor of the present time. They are anxious while they are in active life, to witness the commencement of a society that has such noble ends in view. They are anxious before they are called to that great meeting that all must attend, to have the opportunity of meeting the friends of Agricultural improvement from every portion of our Union, met together in what may be aptly termed a Congress of Farmers.

But more I presume, are anxious to undertake without due deliberation, and a reasonable prospect of success. I am therefore anxious for your opinion, and that of the friends of the agriculture generally in the West, whether the signs of the times for the year 1841, are propitious to the object of commencing the organization of this great National Society.[1]—Don't say, let us wait for the East to move—this is a project worthy the enterprise of the great West.

The farmers must never expect legislative encouragement, either State or National, until they rely more on themselves. They must first move in their own cause until it becomes *popular* to support their interest, and they will then find plenty of Legislators, ready to aid it "to the death."

We are creatures of excitement, and apt to sink into inactivity without it. Does not the agricultural community of the United States need rousing? Can any plan

[1] Wright expressed his approval of organization in the number of the *Union Agriculturist* which contained Robinson's letter.

be devised better calculated to arouse and excite them than would a great National meeting of a National Agricultural Society.

If the plan of present action meets with favor, I have an idea of enlisting as a Missionary in the cause, and "going forth through the land seeking to do good." I think I would "blow my trumpet" so loud that it would disturb the slumber of some of the sluggards, if it did not entirely awake them. I remain most respectfully,

SOLON ROBINSON.

LAKE C. H. Ia. February, 19, 1841.

THE WILL:

A Western Tale, from Real Life[1]

[Indianapolis *Semi-Weekly Journal*, Mar. 19, 23, 26, 1841[2]]

[February ?, 1841]

You, sir, being a man of extensive legal knowledge, are well aware of the great importance of that instrument which is rightly called a LAST WILL, because men are prone to defer the execution of so great and solemn a duty until the last moment, and often then it is too late. I wish I possessed the power to indite such an article as would impress indelibly upon the minds of my readers, the great and imperative duty of attending to this one duty of life, while yet in the vigor of intellect.

Perhaps the recital of a little tale, which I have had in my mind for several years, may not only serve to amuse some of your readers, but it may awaken in the minds of a few, the necessity of attending to this duty *now*.

At the battle of Tippecanoe, in 1811, where more true courage and chivalrous gallantry were exhibited by that Spartan band, than could now be found in the entire ranks of all the villifiers of the leader of the heroes who

[1] This is the first of Robinson's numerous stories and novels. As far as known, it never appeared in book or pamphlet form. The background and plot idea were used again in *Me-won-i-toc* (New York, 1867), but with many changes in characters and story.

[2] The Indianapolis *Semi-Weekly Journal* reprinted "The Will" from the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette* of February 25, 26, and 27, 1841.

bled upon that dreadful day—there was, notwithstanding the happy results of the battle, many a widow and orphan left to mourn the hard fate of husbands and fathers. How much, sir, it is impossible to say how much, the "Great West" owes to the results of that battle. Then, the battle ground was an extensive march into the Indian country. Now, it is in the heart of the rich and populous state of Indiana. Not far from the spot where, less than thirty years ago, the bones of heroes lay bleaching in a savage wilderness, is the flourishing town of Lafayette, a steamboat port on the Wabash. And nearer still runs the Wabash and Erie canal, one of the great links of union between the "father of waters" and the great inland seas of North America. Far, far beyond what was then the border of civilization, now flourish cities, towns, villages, and all the accompanying arts and improvements of civilized life. You, sir, can well remember where the "Far West" then was. Can you tell where it now is?

Is it to be wondered at, that the keen sagacity of the Indian made a desperate attempt to place a barrier to the impending wave that he saw rolling westward, on the banks of the Tippecanoe? Is it to be wondered at, that when the Indian saw that barrier broken down, that he then viewed, and has since viewed it impossible for him to erect a barrier strong enough to stop the rolling wave of white men? Is it to be wondered at, that the immense number who now compose that wave, which has rolled over and far beyond that battle field, should feel a strong disposition to do honor to the names of the heroes of that (for the great West) great day?

But few have a correct idea of the importance attached to that battle, by the Indians, because in their nature they are so taciturn, that they rarely communicate their ideas to those whom they look upon as enemies. But once gain their confidence, and they will pour out their feelings in the strongest manner. It was my fortune to gain that of an old Indian who took a conspicuous part

in that battle, and hear him, while the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks, depict the unhappy result of that day to the red man.—The eulogies that he bestowed upon the character of the commanding General, would put to blush the detractions of some *savages* who were but *papooses* at that time. It was to this Indian, also, that many of the incidents of the fallowing tale are owing.—Let the savage detractors of savage character, blush when they attempt to picture the Indian character as void of the finer feelings of human nature—or else let them boldly assert that this tale is naught but fiction. But to the matter.

Just before the march of "the army," as the small command of General Harrison was then termed, from the old port of Vincennes, on the Wabash, to the memorable field of Tippecanoe, there arrived at that port two of the adventuresome seekers of fortune, from that great nursery of western emigrants, New England.

Abel Atwater, was born on she banks of the Connecticut, and although then scarcely thirty years of age, had already worn the weeds of widowhood. A lovely and interesting wife had left him one son, and a mournful and melancholy heart. Circumstances attended her death that made her loss much more poignant than it otherwise would have been to him. It was before the general application of the invention of those great machines, which it now seems as though they were intended by some evil genii, as great destroyers of the human race. War, pestilence, and famine, have sunk to insignificance, when compared to modern steamboats. At this time the only conveyance through Long Island Sound was by "packet," which depended upon that fickle mistress of their movements, the wind.

At the earnest request of Atwater, his wife and child took passage in one of those to visit her friends in New-York, and to transact some important business for him, as, by an accident, he was rendered unable at that time to leave home. Off the mouth of Connecticut river, the

sloop was becalmed for a whole day. In the evening a breeze sprung up, and after running a few miles, and when near the "old hen and chickens," while all hands, except one at the helm, were at supper, a sudden alarm was felt, by the sudden upsetting of the supper; and amid the roar of the sudden squall which had struck the vessel, and the screams of those in danger, the captain seized an axe and sprung up the companion way with the intention of cutting away the mainsail halyards, but he found them already loosened, and the helmsman overboard with them in his hands, struggling for life. And before he could be got in and the sail secured, the sloop drifted upon the extensive flats along that shore on beam ends. Here, within sight of the lights of numerous farm houses, and scarcely a mile from some of their comfortable firesides, commenced one of those horrible nights only known to those who have experienced the awful horrors of such an awful situation. I say the night commenced, for with the exception of the writer of this article, one sailor, and the infant of Mrs. Atwater, that night has never found an end to its dreadful darkness to the crew of that vessel. One by one the stoutest hearts failed. When succor came with the morning sun, the infant was found securely lashed upon the dead bosom of its mother, and ready to smile upon its deliverers. Perhaps some of my readers may think before they find the end of this narrative, that it would have been better the child had died with his mother. But so it was not deemed.—The child, with the corpse of its mother, was conveyed to the house of a fond father, and now bereaved and almost distracted widower. Grief seized him for her own. And to avoid scenes rendered painful to his sight, he brought his business to a close, and departed for the "Far West," then supposed to be on the banks of the Ohio river. His son was taken into the family of his wife's parents, and an ample estate settled upon him as the only heir. And he is not the only child that has been spoiled under similar circumstances.

On the banks of the beautiful Ohio, Atwater found a resting place to his rambling; and at length, after having acquired an ample fortune, he again joined his hand with one of the beautiful daughters of Virginia. A few weeks only after the event, Atwater, in company with a friend who I shall call Scott, started on an exploring expedition still farther west, and as has been stated, arrived at Vincennes a short time before the battle of Tippecanoe. Fired with the enthusiasm that pervaded all classes, and perhaps urged by the commander-in-chief, to whom he had a letter of introduction, Atwater proposed to his friend to join the army as volunteers for the campaign that was to bring peace to the then border of civilivation. The proposal was readily accepted, and two more brave hearts were added to the little band of gathering heroes. Their spirits remained in the highest state of exhileration during the preparation and march, until the evening before that battle where so much blood of true heroism was spilled. Then, amid the hopes, fears, and natural excitement as to what the morrow might disclose of the policy and intention of the Indians who professed so much friendship for their "Great White Father," and surprise that he should come in battle array among his red friends, a cloud suddenly came over the serene horizon of their minds.

With a dispatch sent forward to the General, came a letter to Atwater from his much loved wife, in answer to one he had written to her announcing his present intention. It was evidently written under the oppression of a gloomy foreboding that her husband was destined to meet the same horrid death from the tomahawk of a savage warrior, that had been dealt upon her father and two brothers. But with that noble, chivalrous feeling, so common to the fair daughters of America, she offered him, dear as he was to her young heart, with a pure invocation to the God of battles, a willing sacrifice to his country's honor, for his country's good. Much would I like to copy that letter here, but there are those

yet living, that might object. But what gave him most concern of all, was a note added to the letter, and evidently much blotted with the tears of suffering beauty, which I venture to copy. It is as follows:

"My Dear Husband—Should it be the will of God, that I never should have the happiness to behold your face again, I have a sure prompting from nature, that ere another year rolls round that I shall possess an image of that face, which I can press to my own throbbing heart. Oh! it shall be my unceasing prayer, that the Great God of peace and war may protect you in peace. But should it be otherwise, Oh! may He be with you and your noble hearted and heroic General, in the darkest hour of battle, and may He be, as I am sure He will, the kind protector of your widow and orphan.

"Oh! forever remember your own dear

Emily."

Never, since the day when the corpse of his first wife was brought suddenly into his presence, had he suffered such intense agony as he now felt; to add to the horror, the prophetic forebodings of his wife, as to the horrid fate that awaited him, involuntarily instilled itself into his own mind. For a moment the thought rushed upon him, to seek the General, who had already shown him uncommon favors, and ask for a discharge; but the thought was soon banished from his mind by the fear of disgrace in the eyes of his brave companions, who had treated him already with such marked respect and esteem, and he determined to meet death sooner than disgrace.—With his mind harrowed with so many unwelcome reflections, he cast himself upon his blanket on the ground to await the return of Scott, who was on duty, with whom he might converse upon the matter of his wife's letter.

Having spent the whole of the preceding night in the saddle, nature soon overcame the distress of his mind, and he sunk into an apparent slumber. I say apparent, because in fact the agony which he suffered while the

whole denouement of this tale was unravelled to him in a dream, was, as he soon informed Scott, more dreadful than his waking thoughts. His first object after waking, was to obtain pen, ink, and paper, and to indite a few lines, of which the following is a literal copy, committed to paper by the light of a burning brand:

"In camp on the Tippecanoe River, Indiana Territory, Aug. 23, 1811.—This is my last Will and Testament:

"To my son, Fortune Atwater, I give all my property in the state of Connecticut, and no other. To my wife, Emily Atwater, I give all my property of every description in the states of Ohio and Virginia, or elsewhere, during her natural life:—Provided, that if she have issue of a son or daughter, then I give one-half of all said propertey to such child at maturity, and the other half at the death of my wife, and if she have no issue, then I give the whole to my wife in fee simple forever. I appoint my said wife and my friend Daniel Scott, Executors to this my last Will."

This instrument was duly signed, sealed and witnessed, and thus safely deposited in a very common appendage to a western traveller, "a pocket in a shirt." He then wrote a farewell letter to his wife, in which he stated the contents of the will, and gave that to Scott, with a solemn injunction to him, should he fall during the campaign, to take charge of his Will and see it faithfully executed. While they were still talking over the matter, and Atwater had grown more cheerful and pleasant, the astounding and unsuspected thrilling war whoop of that dreadful night attack of the Indians, struck upon their ears. A moment more, and Atwater was upon his horse. "Farewell, Scott—*a long farewell!*"—and he stooped forward and seized him by the hand, which he wrung with an almost death grasp, while he repeated "remember my wife—and as you would that God should protect you, so protect my unborn child." "All of which, I most solemnly promise"—repeated Scott; and that faithful promise, registered in blood upon the battle-field of Tippecanoe was faithfully kept.

The horrors, carnage, and finally, the glorious victory, which was won upon that field, are familiar to all.

Perhaps of all scenes that civilized man is called upon to encounter, that most trying to the nerves, and one which requires the most cool fortitude, is a night attack of Indians. It was the "fortune of war," that at the battle of Tippecanoe, both General and men possessed this quality in an eminent degree. But it is not my object to illustrate upon that battle, and have only mentioned it in connection with the actors of my little drama. I have exhibited them upon the scene on the evening previous to the battle, and attempted to depict the mental suffering of one of them. On the evening after, I must change that suffering to the other. Wounded and disconsolate, he sits silent and alone. In vain has he sought among the living and dead for his friend. Atwater is among the missing. The carcase of his horse was found where the hottest of the fight took place, about daylight, but no sign of his body. The next day brought no relief to to the painful suspense, whether he was dead, or in a worse situation—a captive among the Indians. However disfigured his body might be, Scott hoped to recognize it by one mark. He wore upon the middle finger of his left hand a curious ring—the wedding ring of his first marriage. He knew that it was there when he went into battle, for he saw him gazing at it while writing his Will. —And it was so small that it could not be withdrawn from the finger, and had Indian cupidity discovered it, the knife would most likely have been put in requisition to obtain it, and left the mark of a lost finger upon the hand that wore the ring. But no such mark was found, and if he was a captive, no hope could be entertained of recovering him—for the Indians withdrew to their impenetrable fortress in the swamps towards Lake Michigan.

With what disconsolate heart did Scott return, a few weeks afterwards, to the dreary house of his lost friend, to mingle his manly tears with those of his weeping wife.

Time rolled on his ceaseless course, and among other things brought the image of the lost husband in the form of a fair daughter, who, at the suggestion of Scott, was christened "Indiana."

After years of mourning, without the least tidings of Atwater, his widow accepted the heart and hand of her noble-minded friend, and became Mrs. Scott. Knowing the contents of the Will, they acted upon the principles of it, though the original being lost, they could not do so in all the "legal forms by law provided." Indiana, like the state whose name she bore, grew in strength and loveliness—and like that state, too, she loved and honored, and ever will honor *one* of the heroes of the Tippecanoe. Scott to her was a father—she knew no other. Peace and prosperity smiled upon them without alloy, until about the time she reached her maturity, when a most sudden and unexpected shock came upon them.

The son of Atwater had visited them once, a few years before, since when they had not seen or heard but little of him, and that little not much to his credit. Dissipation and its attendant vices were fast dissipating his ample fortune; but the thought never entered their peaceful habitation that he intended to lay claim to any part of *their* possessions, until they were astonished one morning by an early visit of a person who never before had had the honor to visit them in an official capacity, and whose appearance now indicated that he did not come in a private one.

In vain did Scott rack his brain to think who, why, or for what, the sheriff could have a writ for him. And even after the sheriff handed the writ to him endorsed, "Atwater *vs* Scott and others," he was still at a loss until the lively Indiana cried out, "the dream—the dream. Oh, my poor father's dream upon the fatal battle-field." Alas! too true, that dream was about to be realized. The dissipated, profligate young Atwater, having spent his own estate, had commenced suit to eject the second wife and child of Atwater, from theirs. Could he do it? A

moment's reflection convinced the acute, penetrating mind of Scott that, at least, there was much danger, and so he expressed himself to the anxious inquiries of his wife and the lovely Indiana, whom he loved as an only child. But, they would not torment themselves without cause, and he immediately started to consult "one learned in the law." To him he laid open the whole case. His advice was honest. He had better compromise with the claimant, and for a gross sum get a quit claim to his right. This plan was adopted, and gave hope, and hope gives relief while it lasts. But it was of short duration, for a return of mail brought an answer from Atwater's Attorney in a neighboring town, "that the only terms of compromise were ten thousand in cash, and"—here Scott hastily rose and handed the letter to Indiana, with the remark, that the rest concerned her. Never before in her life had she seen such a settled gloom upon her dear father's face. She took the letter and read—"and no compromise will be accepted, until Indiana is united to a person whom the plaintiff will name, if his very kind offer is accepted." She was not a girl to faint on such an occasion, although the proposal was most shocking, for she well knew that the husband to be named for her was no other than the stinking carcase of one of those Attornies who disgrace the profession—and no other than the writer himself, who had been thrice rejected, and no doubt now was at the very bottom of this suit, and had procured the plaintiff to institute it. Calmly she returned the letter to Scott, remarking that she was willing to do any thing that would add to the happiness of her parents. Never, then, will you accept this proposal. We will be reduced to beggary first. But, said the kind hearted girl, why talk of beggary? Surely I can claim an equal share of the property with my *dear* brother, and with that we can all live comfortable. But the thought of being obliged to give up one-half to the gratification of the profligate habits of young Atwater, or the gloating rascality of his Attorney, was gall and wormwood to

Scott. Not but the half would still be sufficient, but how could he reconcile himself to become dependant on the bounty of his Indiana, in his old age.

But what could be done. The day of trial was fast approaching, and although he would have made another attempt at compromise with the heir himself, if he could have found him, yet he could not bring himself to the disgusting task of making any proposal to his Attorney. Excitement among the people ran high in his favor, for he was much esteemed; but what would that avail him in law. There were two points only, and they were weak ones, his Attorney advised him, in his favor: Atwater's Attorney might neglect to prove the identity of the claimant, and that he was then living for no one expected that he would then be present; or he might neglect to bring evidence to establish him as the legal heir of Abel Atwater. Futile hope. Why did not the thought occur to them, that he might raise an objection on his part, to the legal right of Indiana, to the inheritance of the lost hero of Tippecanoe. At length calmness settled upon their minds, and they began to make arrangements to make a virtue of necessity, and quietly yield to the impending fate that hung over them, and give up one-half of all their posoessions, to be scattered to the four winds of heaven by the debauched, profligate heir, and his worthy coadjutor, his Attorney.

Through his attorney, Scott made the proposition, and received for an answer, that nothing short of the whole, "together with all the rents, issues and profits thereof, or one half, *and the hand of Indiana,* would now be received." This time he did not communicate the answer to his wife or Indiana. But gloomy forebodings settled upon his mind, as to the result of the trial. Indiana, though she was no believer in dreams, could not drive the impression from her mind, that she should yet escape from the coils of the monstrous serpent in which her father had seen her entwined.—This serpent, Atwater dreamed, had the body, fetid breath and forked tongue

of his species, but the head and face of his son. He had enfolded his lovely Indiana, whom he found grown to womanhood, in his deadly folds, and was about to crush her to death, when suddenly a great noise approached from the West, and an aged Indian stood before the monster, and slowly unrolled a sheet of paper, on which were written these words:

"The last Will of———Tippecanoe."

Liks the magic of a weak magician, when the magic of a more mighty one is brought to bear upon his enchantment, the coils of the serpent slowly unwound from his child, and were about enclosing around the form of his respected General, when his lovely Indiana rose in all her magesty and loveliness, and placing her foot upon the neck of the serpent, took the General by the right hand, and suddenly he stood a tower of strength before them, while the magic serpent slowly dissolved into thin air. Such was a portion of the dream mentioned as having passed through her father's mind on the eve of the battle, in which he was lost, and she could not divert her mind from the belief, but that she should yet escape from the coils that were drawing around her now. Happy would she have been if she could have impressed her own buoyant hopes upon the minds of her parents. To them, however, the result looked far different.

And at length when the day arrived, Scott prepared to attend court, with a mind bordering upon insanity.

Indiana insisted upon accompanying him, but her presence, nor the warm and cheering greeting of every acquaintance, could not bring back the wonted smile upon his countenance. Many a heart wept for them, as they approached the crowded court, and well had they cause to weep, for they were the friends of the poor. Many a devoted soul declared "that Providence had placed wealth in their hands, as instruments to dispense blessings around them, and never would such faithful servants be forsaken." And the same class declared, that an incident that took place that morning was one of the special

interpositions of that same good Providence, in their favor.

A stranger traveling through the village, while upon a smooth road, and without any apparent cause, broke one of the axeltrees of his carriage, which necessarily detained him through the day. In fact it was with the utmost difficulty that he could prevail upon a mechanic to do his work, so anxious were all classes to witness the "great trial." Finding so much excitement prevailing, his curiosity was also excited, and, by the kindness of the landlord he was introduced to a gentleman of the bar, who promised to accommodate him with a seat within the bar—a respect often tendered to strangers in the West.

During the progress of the case it was discovered that no point had been neglected by the complainant; among other things he denied the right of Indiana, as heir to any part of the estate of Abel Atwater, and openly denounced her as a bastard. Here the coils of the serpent thickened. Scott flew to his wife for the "marriage certificate." Records of marriage at that time were not kept as they now are. Mrs. Scott knew the time and place they were married well. A difficulty had arisen with her step mother in regard to the wedding, and they went to the house of the Rev. Mr. Ives in the next town, and there in presence of his wife, and some twenty slaves, were married. Ives and his wife were both dead, long since. Old Dinah, one of these same slaves, then living with them, and some dozen more remembered the time well. But, though one would as soon doubt his own existence as doubt the world of Old Dinah, she was a negro—a slave—and her testimony in a Court of *Justice* was not evidence. Mrs. Scott also knew that a marriage certificate was given; that Mr. Atwater put it in his pocketbook—the same pocket book that he took with him—and which was undoubtedly with him on the field of battle. With a still heavier heart than before, he returned to the Court. Just then his council had been called on for rebut-

ting evidence. What had they to offer. The fiendish writhings of the serpent counsel of the claimant, were visible to all, and had "lynch law" been as much in practice at that day, as it has since, his own personal safety might have been endangered. All seemed to sympathise with the defendants, even the Court itself; for when there seemed no hope for them, the Court asked the counsel "if they had no witness to prove that Atwater had ever acknowledged this girl as his child?" "No—He never saw her; she was born eight months after her father left home."—"Then the Court cannot perceive how it can avoid pronouncing judgment in favor of the plaintiff, however much it might be urged by private feelings to do otherwise. We have no doubt of the legitimate birth of this interesting young lady now before us, yet in the absence of all legal testimony of the past, we are most painfully constrained to pronounce a judgment that will make a record to the contrary."

This last shock was too much for the nerves of Indiana. To lose her inheritance was enough; but to be branded with bastardy, without the power to refute it, seemed too much for delicacy to bear. In the agony of the moment she stretched out her hands, while she groaned aloud. The stranger mentioned before, had manifested a most uncommon interest throughout all the proceedings, as circumstances had been developed, which the reader has been made acquainted with; even so much so as to draw the attention of every person to his actions. But when Indiana extended her hands, one of them came almost in contact with his eyes, and he could contain himself no longer. Springing from his seat, he caught the hand in his, and while gazing upon it, exclaimed, "By heavens, *the ring!*" Like a sudden explosion, was this short expression; the first effect of which is to strike all dumb for an instant, and then louder and louder grows the hum of a thousand anxious voices. Indiana screamed with the sudden and strange words.—Scott was the first to speak: "Sir, in pity tell, what know you of that ring?"

The Court partaking of the sudden, new and singular excitement, begged the gentleman to explain. Indiana had suffered him still to retain her hand, still looking upon the ring. It was her mother's wedding ring, a plain gold one, having on one side two hearts and two hands united, and was a fac simile of one her father always wore, and which had been the wedding ring of his first wife, which he drew from her finger after her shocking death. "I have," said the gentleman, "within a few months past, seen a ring exactly like that, in a place that, since I have heard the statements here to-day, has excited the most intense curiosity in my mind.—While attending the Treaty of Tippecanoe, made last fall with the Pottawattamie Indians, for the purchase of all their lands in the north part of Indiana, I observed upon the finger of a young squaw a ring exactly like this. Pray, lady, let me see the inside of this. No, not exactly like this. The initials and date of the engraving were different; but in every other respect the same. Being considerably acquainted with the language, I offered to buy the ring. I made offer after offer until the girl was strongly tempted to part with it, and cast an imploring look towards her mother for leave to do so. The old squaw said no. I urged her to give her reasons. She seemed to be in a communicative mood, and told me to sit down and listen. The substance of what she said was so strongly impressed upon my mind, I never can forget it. "More than twenty years ago," said she, "we were a powerful nation, and as proud as powerful; the waves of whitemen came rolling into our country, and upon the banks of this river, two days ride from here, our warriors attempted to stop the wave. As well might we attempt to stop the waves of this river. A great white Chief came up the Oubasche, with a little band of soldiers, and offered to have a talk with our wise men.

"The old men wanted to talk—the young men wanted to fight. We will fall upon them, said they, before the next sunrise, and he never shall shine upon one of them

again—their hated carcases shall not know where they now sleep. The old men feared; but the young men would not listen to their fathers, and the Great Spirit was angry at them for their disobedience, and guided the bullets of the white men to their hearts. The sword of him who wore that ring, entered the heart of my oldest son. His father would have taken his scalp, but I begged that he might be given to me in the room of my son. He was wounded and faint, or we could not have tamed him, for he was as wild as the catamount, and strong as the bear. I took him to our wigwam on the banks of the Lake of Musquash, and there for more than twenty moons did I nurse and feed him, and taught him to speak our language; but our great medicine man could not heal his wounds, and the Great Spirit called him away. He was a good white man, and if all were like him, the Red men might live in peace. He told me that he had two squaws —that one of them was buried in the great salt lake, away where the sun rises—and that the other one lived on the banks of the Beautiful River, and that if one of our young men would take that ring and a little bit of paper covered with a good talk, to his squaw she would load him with dollars. But we were at war with the whites, and no one dared to go. One moon before he died, he took his papers that were covered with his talk, and carefully wrapped them up in deer skin, and hollowed out a little hole in the side of a rock, and put them in, and made a plug of cedar wood and drove it in, to keep them safe until the Great Spirit should send his young child to find them. Every time the water grows hard, when the sun goes far off, I go upon it and sprinkle the rock with blood, and pray to the Great Spirit to send his child to unlock the talk from the rock; and when the sun comes back, I go out in my canoe upon the water, and listen to the good spirit of my white son, as he sits upon the rock bathing his feet in the water, waiting for his child to come. But now my people have sold their land to the white man, and I fear we shall be driven away beyond the

great father of waters, before the time comes. This ring he bade me keep, and whenever white men were near us, to wear it so that they might see it. For one day there will come one with such a ring as this upon her hand, to seek his grave, and then we should show her the rock and the Great Spirit would be glad. White stranger, money cannot buy that ring from the wife of She-val-ya. But when you shall find a white squaw with such a ring as that upon her hand, come you with her to our wigwam, and the Great Spirit shall make your heart glad, and the hearts of his red children. Stranger, wherever you go, remember the ring."

"But we will not go away beyond the great river," said the old man. "I have claimed a reservation of what our white father calls two sections of land, and I will have it upon the banks of our beautiful lake; and we will not go away until the Great Spirit sends the white man's child with the ring."

The truth of this wild tale was impressed upon my mind by the stern refusal to part with the ring; but that I ever should see its counter-part, was the farthest thing from my mind, or I should have taken more pains to have ascertained where these Indians might be found again. However, as the old man is one of the reservee's of the treaty, I presume he can be easily found. With breathless and intense anxiety was this strange narrative listened to, and with the deepest emotions of pleasure and high wrought hopes, by all except one individual in that crowded room. He saw a distant prospect that his own villainy and revenge might yet loose its object, and he earnestly, but vainly battled against the application of the defendant's counsel for a new trial, which they claimed on the ground of newly discovered testimony. And when the Court made the order granting the new trial, it was in vain that the sheriff and sheriff's officers cried order at the top of their voices; it only served to add strength to that universal shout of exultation and thanksgiving, that rose up to heaven.—The Court im-

mediately adjourned, to allow the people to give free vent to their feelings, as well as to enjoy the same pleasure themselves. Indiana was almost overcome with her emotions; and to the anxious inquiries of her father, Scott, she could only reply, "see, see, my father, see, the serpent's folds unwinding."

The stranger, whom I shall call Western, was now under no trouble to find mechanics ready to repair his carriage, and, had it been necessary, to furnish an entire new one, many a hand would have been found ready for the work. But he was not permitted to depart suddenly. Although his business was of the most urgent nature, Scott could not allow him to leave the place until he had visited his wife and narrated over his "Indian story," and written down every particular that could possibly be of interest to him. Perhaps, however, Scott alone, would not have been able to persuade him from his onward course, but in this case he had more powerful counsel than in the case in court.

The blandishments of Indiana were irresistible; and the "Great Western," was retained for a short time.

It was rather a dangerous undertaking, too, for a young man of such prepossessing exterior and well stored mind as he possessed. For the heart of Indiana was yet untangled, and from gratitude and friendship, it is but a short step to love. And ere young Western left the hospitable roof of Scott, that step was taken. It was agreed that whenever that old wedding ring should be recovered, it should again be put in use. It was found by conversation with him, that Scott and his father, a brave Kentuckian, fought side by side at the battle of Tippecanoe. It was also settled before he left, that on his return from the east, he should stop and they would fix upon a time to visit the northern part of the state of Indiana, in search of the grave and Indian friends of Atwater. And notwithstanding all the representations of Western, of the wild unbroken wilderness, and all the wants of the comforts of civilized life, Indiana deter-

mined that she would accompany him and Scott, and never give back or mourn the fatigue, until she had moistened the grave of her father with her tears.

In the meantime, young Atwater's Attorney, in his turn, became uneasy at the result of the next trial.—He now, on the part of the claimant, renewed the proposal for a compromise. He even offered to take less than half the value of the property. Scott would, perhaps, have closed with this offer, but Indiana firmly resisted, declaring that however dark the prospect, she yet humbly believed the whole of the dream of her father would be accomplished.

Finding his proposals rejected, he returned to his villainy, as natural as "the hog to his wallow." His first attempt was to bribe one of the negroes about the house to rob Indiana of her ring. Failing in this, he determined to have one made exactly like it, and with the means of that, work one of the worst of deceptions upon the Indians, and obtain possession of the papers; one of which he had no doubt was the Will made upon the battle ground of Tippecanoe, and which, if ever in possession of Indiana, would forever ruin his chance upon the property, as he had ascertained that the witnesses were yet living, and besides the hand writing was such that it could never be disputed. With this end in view, he wrote to Washington to ascertain in what part of the state the reservation made by the treaty to an Indian called Shoval-ya, was situated. How he was astounded when informed by the war officer "that no such name appeared upon the treaty." Weighing every one in his own balance, he immediately pronounced Western a villain and imposter, and his whole story a vile fabrication, got up and contrived by the defendant's counsel, merely to get a year or two more time to make way with the property. "And now I recollect," says he, "how darned coolly they sat and listened to the infernal lie of their dirty tool." And with this comfortable persuasion, he settled his mind to patiently await the "law's delay;" fully satis-

fied that, finally, he should be able to make himself ample amends.

His bravado in regard to the falsehood about the reservation, soon came to the ears of those he would make his victims, and caused no little uneasiness in their minds. Scott also wrote to Washington, and received for answer, that there was no such Indian name known to the Department, and the only one on the treaty which began with "Sho," was that of "Sho-bon-nier, for two sections of land *at his village*"—which, as it was upon a treaty for lands entirely in the state of Illinois, could not be the one of which he sought information. This greatly shook the faith of Scott in the whole story. Not so with Indiana. To her, "love lent his potent aid," and she declared her firm belief that this mist would yet clear away. In the mean time, however, the period fixed by Western for his return had expired, and they heard no tidings from him, and now an occasional cloud could be seen upon the brow even of the gay and cheerful Indiana.

In this "melancholy mood," I shall leave the actors of this drama of real life, while I shift the scene to a distant land and introduce new characters upon the stage.

And now the writer cannot bring his tale to a close, without speaking more of himself than is his wont to do, because he becomes an actor himself, and if a shade of egotism should discover itself, my readers must forgive and forget, nor set down aught in malice.

The purchase made by the United States at the treaty of Tippecanoe, in October, 1832, embraces a vast extent of country. The greater part of all that tract north of the Wabash river, now composing more than twenty populous counties in Indiana, together with a large body of land north of the St. Joseph river in Michigan, and also an untold quantity in the north-east part of the state of Illinois, was included. Out of this the Indians made some two hundred "reservations," of all sizes and shapes, from a quarter section, to a whole township, to all manner df jaw-breaking Indian names, located upon rivers,

creeks, and lakes, the Indian names of which required an equal exercise of jaws. Besides these "permanent locations," there were a great number of "floating reservations," to be afterwards located by the reservee's, or by that numerous class of "reservation speculators," who were able to obtain the right from the individual Indians, in the way of "a fair business transaction." Need I say that one of the ingredients in these transactions, was neither cold water nor honesty. And here let me mention one of the good traits in President Jackson's administration, which was an after determination to refuse his sanction to all treaties having these "supicious looking reservations" embodied in them. At the date of this treaty, this great tract of country, composed of some of the richest soil in the world, covered in part with unbroken forests, and interspersed with those native fields of waving grass, which cover the beautiful rolling prairies of the West, contained scarcely a trace of civilization.

Has magic waved her wand over this land? No. But the native enterprize of our national character and the roving disposition of our population, united with the love of emigration and excitement incident to the settlement of a new country, as well as the hope and expectation of bettering their condition in life, has filled—no, not filled, but scattered—an enterprizing and thriving population over the whole of that region, so few short years since, a savage wilderness. Where then rose the lone wigwam, composed of sticks, rushes, and grass, now stand cities, towns, villages, mills, farms, and all the parapharnalia of the white man. And where are the late inhabitants? Ask our government! Or ask the wind, the wave, or silent earth. A remnant of them would have continued upon their "reservations," but "treaties," made with whom, or when, or where, the Great Spirit only knows, found their way to Washington, and these, too, have been hunted down, if not by "blood hounds," of the canine race, by those but a small remove in the scale above; their corn-fields trampled under the feet of armed men and

horses, and their wigwams, yea, their holy houses of worship, sacrilegiously burnt before their eyes, their property seized and sold "under the hammer," and themselves surrounded and forbidden to mourn.—Aye, for a whole hot summer day, forbid to ask or seek for water, while they were *driven* from their homes and graves of their fathers, far away beyond "the great river."

Will retributive justice ever be visited upon this nation for national sins? If so, then wo to the day, when it is showered upon it. But enough of this digression. Whoever has travelled over the north part of Indiana, knows, and whoever has not, may know by casting his eye upon the map, that it abounds with a vast number of small lakes. And in such an extent of territory, uninhabited throughout a great portion of it, how hopeless must have been the task of finding an individual Indian, without any fixed habitation, though it might be known that his principal place of residence was upon the banks of some one of those numerous lakes, the Indian name, or rather, some one of its names, might be known. But how much more hopeless would be the task, if the name of that Indian who was sought, had been misunderstood, or forgotten. But let the faithful seeker after truth never despond, however dark the path before him, for "truth is mighty and shall prevail." Let him persevere with a firm reliance on the justness of his cause, and the end shall be equal to the means used to accomplish his object.

The writer of this article is one of those who helped to fill up the territory above spoken of. Two years after the date of the treaty, I pitched my tent upon a beautiful glade of blue grass, upon the east side of a pleasant grove of hickory, burr, oak, crabapple, and plums, and on the border of a gently undulating prairie, stretching away to the east for several miles, where late, and for a long time before, had been a favorite habitation of the natives of this delightful country. On the same ground, where, for many years had been the Indian's garden, still flourishes that useful appendage to every farm-house.—

Though perhaps cultivated now with more taste and care, yet its products then were as sweet to the occupants as now. Here, "fifteen miles from neighbors," with such comforts as a "log cabin," in such a situation affords, and with but few luxuries of life, not even a mug of "hard cider," past an eventful and pleasant winter. Not far away from my cabin, was one of those clear and beautiful little lakes, which are interspersed through all the country, and upon its borders were several of the wigwams of the late owners of the soil. During one of my peregrinations around its banks, which were several miles in extent, I discovered upon a most beautiful knoll, shaded with a thick cluster of red cedars, an "Indian grave," upon which it seemed as though unusual care and attention had been bestowed—stones to form a mound around the sleeper of the last long sleep, had been brought from the foot of the hill, the rocks of which were constantly washed by the serge of the lake, and made fit music for so mournful and solemn a place. Well knowing the habits of the Indians to be like the whites, to congregate their dead together, my curiosity was excited at this lone grave. While I sat deeply musing on many matters that this grave brought to mind, I discovered a canoe upon the lake, and in it an old squaw, paddling directly for the spot where I was seated. When she came ashore, she knelt down and devoutly crossed herself, as if she stood upon holy ground. I may here remark that the relics of the early religious instruction, so extensively bestowed upon the Indians, by the French Catholics, in the first exploration of the West by that people, are still distinctly visible. After thus performing her devotions, she approached the grave where I stood. At first she seemed terrified at finding the sacredness of that spot intruded upon by the feet of a stranger, and him, too, a white man. To quiet her fears, and I must own, also, to gratify my own curiosity, for once in my life I played the hypocrite. Quick as thought, I knelt down by the side of the grave, uncovered my head and left the long grey

locks, (which sometimes create confidence and respect in a stranger,) stream to the wind, and devoutly crossing myself, I motioned her to approach. She no longer hesitated, but come and knelt down opposite to me, and, as I judged, murmured a prayer to the Great Spirit, in which, from my imperfect knowledge of the language, I supposed she was thanking him for his goodness in sending me to my brother's grave. This I subsequently ascertained was the fact. For from the striking resemblance in form and feature to him who was there buried, such she supposed me to be. When she arose she took me by the hand and motioned towards the canoe, but until we had left this sacred spot, she deigned not to open her lips except in prayer.

Then by sign and speech, I understood that she wished me to cross the lake with her to her wigwam; and notwithstanding the utter dread I have had since one dreadful night in youth, to all witchcraft, and particularly an Indian canoe, my curiosity overcame my fears, and I permitted myself to be guided entirely at her pleasure. When we arrived at the wigwam, a few words from her to the Indian, called forth expressions of marked respect, surprise and joy, at my arrival; I saw that I was enveloped in mystery, and determined patiently to await coming events, to clear it up. After sundry unfoldings of cloth and twine, the old squaw produced a small silver snuffbox, on the lid of which was engraved "A. A. Hartford, 1796," and in the inside, carefully packed in fur, was a much worn gold finger ring, on one side of which "two hearts and two hands were joined;" and on the inside were engraved, "A. A. to P. W.," and a date which was so much worn I could not make it out. The initials, time, and place, on the box, instantly called to mind one whom I had known while a lad, and had not known or heard of since a short time after the death of her who might have worn that ring upon her wedding day. That day or her maiden name, I knew nothing of, but her death scene could never be blotted from my mind

while reason holds her sway, so long as the tide flows through the sound of Long Island. It was my own hands that lashed her and her cherub child to that fatal vessel, where she perished, and upon her cold breast that child lived. Years had past since this scene and these actors in it had passed before my eyes. No wonder, then, that now it was called up in a manner and place so singular, that it should have overpowered my manly faculties, and so completely absorbed every other sense, that while the tears rolled down my cheeks, I should have entirely forgotten that other and anxious eyes were gazing on mine. My actions had a tendency to confirm first impressions upon these rude people, and perhaps might have profitted by keeping up the deception.

But I had made up my mind when I settled in this country, where I expected to be surrounded by these people, that in all my intercourse and dealings with them, I would preserve a different course. But it was no little trouble for me to convince them that I was not the one they had supposed me to be. However, by the dint of a little French, which the old man, (being himself half French,) understood, a little Indian, a little English, and much gesticulation, I at length succeeded tolerably well in making myself understood. And by the same signs, I learned who the occupant of the "grave among the cedars" was, and many other particulars, that, could they have been known to some of the characters that have been introduced to my readers, would have been of vast importance to them. But then I knew not that such characters lived; and therefore the scene of this day, unconnected with other parts of this tale, were uninteresting to any but myself, and to none but my wife did I ever mention it. Having established a friendship with this family upon a firm basis, I informed them where my "wigwam" was, and invited them to return the visit. Gaining the confidence of the old man, who was a kind of a village chief, and had been a noble warrior, gained the confidence of the whole village with it, and was ulti-

mately of no little advantage to me. For whether I deserved the appellation or not, I soon became extensively known among the Indians as the "good che-mo-ko-man." A short time after the above interview, the old man came to my house with a paper written by the Indian Agent at Chicago, and intended as a cautionary notice to those persons about settling in this section of country. The substance of the notice was, "that Sho-bon-nier, a French Indian, and who was also called Chevalier, (pronounced Sho-val-ya,) was entitled to a reservation of two sections of land at this village, near the lake of Red Cedars, and that persons making improvements near them, should be careful not to get on this reservation before it should be surveyed and located." Here was another piece of intelligence, in the spelling and pronunciation of this name, of little interest to me, that if it could have been known to those deeply interested, would have saved them months of toil and painful anxiety. But their toilsome wanderings, which at times seemed like the wandering of an ignis fatuus, draws to a close.

One cold snowy night in December which had suddenly come on from a warm day, while we were gathered around that most cheerful and pleasant of all places, on a cold winter night, the broad log heap fire of a warm log cabin, one of the sons of old Sho-val-ya stopped in to tell me just before dark he saw a wagon about six miles off on the trackless Prairie, heading towards my wigwam, and that "two men and one squaw, may be so freeze to death." In five minutes more, and the broad glare of a torch of dry hickory bark threw its strong rays of light far away through the mist of driving snow, while ever and again the sudden flash and loud report of a pair of muskets, spread their light and sound for miles around. Who that ever has been in distress upon the ocean, or upon the ocean-like prairies of the west, bewildered and lost, that will not feel the light and sound of this description of welcome signals, penetrating to the innermost recesses of his heart. So felt those wanderers upon that

night. When every hope had fled, and they were endeavoring so to arrange themselves as in the best possible manner to prevent the intense suffering that awaited them, a sound breaks upon the stillness of night—another and another. "Some other miserable beings, like ourselves in distress. No! See, yon glare of light"—and the sweet voice of an exhausted female form cheers her companions onward, with the expression of her unshaken faith, that "Providence still guides our steps." Oh the faith, hope, love, and charity that endureth all things, and conquereth all things, dwelleth in the breast of a virtuous woman.

Welcome was that cheerful fireside to three suffering fellow-creatures, that night—and as welcome were they made to partake of its comforts as though it had been their own. In fact, throughout the west, (perhaps it is so in all new countries,) hospitality is not only a virtue, but the exercise of it becomes a pride, which all seek to gratify. The recipients of hospitality on this evening, were an old man, who had seen some sixty years come and go, and whose head was not whitened by the snow that had lodged upon it, but whose limbs were stiffened by cold and fatigue to that degree that he had to be lifted from the wagon, and a young man of some less than half his age, whose young and active blood had not been effected by the cold, and a female still younger, who called the old man father, and seemed to show a sisterly affection towards the young man, though the appellation of "Mr." to his name, told that he could not claim that honor. She was much overcome with the cold and fatigue, and it is probable she would have found an end to her sufferings on that night, and might have had her final resting place by the side of the tenant of the "cedar grave," if it had not been for the care of one who had been taught to call that tenant "his white brother." Still more deeply was she impressed with the idea that providence had a special care over her and her friends, when told that no lights would have been made, or guns fired,

if it had not been for the information given by that Indian. Her first thought was to make him some ample reward. Little did she think how soon she would add more joy to his mind than wealth could give him. The first care of those in whose hands the wanderers found themselves, was to furnish them such refreshments as their humble abode afforded; after partaking of which the natural enquiries were made of them as a matter of course, considering the inquirers were from the land of universal inquisitiveness; as to where they were from, where they were going, and why they were here in this unfrequented place, unless they were "land hunting," which from their appearance being so different from the usual appearance of that class, was hardly probable.

"Not so improbable," replied the old man, "as you might suppose. For months past we have been 'land hunting.' We have searched the north part of Indiana with the most untiring perseverance, we have endured cold, hunger, and fatigue; we have slept in wigwams, woods, (and casting his eyes around to scan the cheap comforts of his present resting place,) and in some white men's houses not as comfortable as yours is this night, and never until this night, has my heart failed me." "But, O father, do not let it fail yet. Surely we have had another evidence this night that we may yet persevere a little longer." "But, my dear girl, we are now nearly at the extremety of hope; we have sought and searched almost every lake and every pond of Indiana, and every reservation that we could hear of, and as yet, no tidings, no hopes of finding what we seek. Often have we been sent after an ignis fatuus, which, ever recedes as we approach, as yet, and where shall we inquire again? we have not been able to find an individual who knew an Indian of that name, nor one who in any respect answered his description, who had a reservation of land, of any other name; we have not even found a lake with rocky shores, nor among all the wild and uncouth Indian names, we've heard not one that sounded like the name of that

one we sought. My child, we have been deceived—grossly deceived—wickedly, wantonly imposed upon by a foolish tale; and to morrow I will set my face homeward; I will be the victim of deception no longer." "But, father, my dear father, surely you cannot think that he, that noble, generous, kind hearted man who just left the room, is guilty of deception? that he has imposed upon us?" "I cannot answer. I would rather lose my right hand than know it to be so; but I now wholly despair. Never before has the scene looked so awfully dark to me."

"Then trust, hope, and pray a little longer. Remember that just before the dawn is deepest darkness. Perhaps even to-morrow the dawn may burst unexpectedly upon us. Never have I seen you so sunk in despair; it must be owing to your great bodily sufferings this evening. You must not attempt to go further, that is true, you shall remain under this blessed roof for a few days, and we will go on without you, I shall not fear to leave you here, and as to myself, I will waive false delicacy upon so holy an occasion as seeking a father's grave. But what, you too in despair"—addressing the young man just then entering, with a face that clearly indicated a heavy heart within. "Then am I indeed a poor unhappy orphan." And her own heart at length, after buffetting difficulties almost innumerable, for many months, without one tear, now burst forth like a pent up fountain of pure pearls, pouring forth from a diamond reservoir, falling upon an alabaster basin.

The reader has already discovered who these characters are, and can understand their language. To me, then, it was strange and unaccountable. It was clear that the old man, though so called, was not her father. Could it be possible that the allusion to her "father's grave" had any connection with that among the cedars. Curious conjectures passed rapidly through my mind. The old man had become calm. The girl's heart seemed ready to burst, and sympathy of the young man showed his was any thing but stone.

"You spoke of seeking a Lake," said I addressing the old man." "Yes." "And do you know the name?" "Alas, I think it has neither name nor existence; it is like those singular illusions upon the burning sands of Africa, we never can reach it. The Indian name is said to be something that sounds like Mus-qua-ock—or some such thing, though really I do not think it would be very easy to translate into English." "Nothing more easy, sir," I replied, "the name signifies the Lake of Red Cedars, and it is only a few miles—" Here a sudden start behind me from the young lady, who seemed suddenly electrified at my words, interrupted my sentence; and next an exclamation of surprise from my wife, who was bending over her, and the wild cry as she held her hand in hers, "the ring—the ring—look—'tis the same." Winter as it was, had a sudden peal of loud thunder reverberated over the house, the electric fluid could not have produced a more sudden and wonderful effect upon the inmates, than did these simple words.

To the three strangers under that roof, they were full of import and meaning. To two of them, the similarity of sound, and sudden excitement on beholding that ring, were so similar to such sounds and such a manner of expression, to those which once before had broken upon their ears in the same wild startling manner, that if they had ever doubted the truth of their companion, those doubts were now forever removed. Connected with the translation of the name of that Lake, those words told to them, that the beacon light which had a few hours before guided them to a place of comfort for their bodies, had also guided them to a place of joyful relief to their minds. Their hurried and confused questions were as rapidly answered as language could convey the desired intelligence. The double name of the Indian had caused them great difficulty, and to the inquiry why none of the Indians seemed to know him by the name mentioned in the "treaty," the answer was easy. They had always pronounced it according to the spelling, when in fact

according to the French patois, "nier" had the simple sound of "a" or "ya," so that "Sho-bon-nier" when spoken, was "Sho-bon-*a*."

Fatigue, care, sleep, and suffering were banished from beneath that roof that night. A thousand questions and answers, pro and con, had to be asked and given, until all the facts well known to the reader, were made known to each questioner and listener in that little group, and until each with each other had exhausted the subject, none sought repose.

Before the morning sun showed himself in all his gorgeous splendor, known only to those who have seen a winter sunrise upon a broad and clear prairie, one of those sudden changes, so common around the vicinity of Lake Michigan, both summer and winter, had taken place in the surrounding atmosphere, as if in glorification of the sudden change from clouds, darkness and despair that had taken place within that dwelling. And long before I had shaken off the effect of the last night's late hours from sleep bereft, he was pouring forth his warm and cheering rays in sparkling effulgence. The fire was still burning cheerfully upon the broad hearth, and before it sat one of the young children of old Sho-val-ya, patiently waiting what seemed to him the wanted, though tedious sloth of white men, to wear off, without his dis- disturbing it. He had come with an earnest message from his father for me to visit him that morning, and showed me by signs that he wished me to bring with me an augur that was hanging against the wall of the cabin. He said something about whitemen, the purport of which I could not understand, but seemed gratified when I assured him that I would certainly attend the summons. Accordingly I took a hasty breakfast, and arranging for my new friends to follow, I took my gun and walked ahead. I found the old Indian gloomy and in deep distress. He motioned me to a seat before him, and taking out his tobacco and pipes, filled one for himself and another for me, without speaking a word. And in the

same silence we both puffed away, until the little pent-up wigwam was so full of smoke, that one unaccustomed to such an atmosphere, might have found respiration rather difficult to his effeminate lungs. He then motioned to me again, and we both knocked out the ashes from our pipes in a little heap between us. He then looked up to the smoke, slowly ascending through the little apperture at the top of the wigwam, and for the first time since my entrance, spoke—

"So fades the red man away. But a few short months ago, and they filled all this land, so that there was no more room. Now, what remains of them?" And he pointed to the little heap of ashes upon the ground between us. I could not restrain a sigh—perhaps a tear.

"The first death blow was struck by your great war chief, on the banks of the Tippecanoe. Then the tomahawk was raised and it could not be burried. Better had it been for us, had it not then tasted blood. But our young men were then like a heard of young buffaloes, and they could not be tamed. A great war chief came also among us, whose blood came not from the blood of our fathers. And with him came his brother, who was a great medicine, but his spirit was not from the good Manito. And he worked conjurations among us, and bade us strike your women and children, and our sweet father that wears a red coat, and lives away beyond the Salt Lake, would give us many guns and plenty of powder, and that we should drive your race from our border. For a time his words proved true. But the Great Father of your people loved war, and he sent the great war chief who laid his hand so heavily upon us on the Tippecanoe, and our warriors could not stand before him. The blood of the strange war chief then for the first time mingled with the blood of our people, and the earth drank up both together. Then your people sent away their Great Father who loved war, to his own wigwam, and another came to your great council house who loved peace. After him came another who would have

taught his red children how to read, and how to raise corn, but your people would not that he should, for they said the red man had too much land, and that they must give it to their white brothers. And they drove the Great Father away from their council house, because he had a white heart; and they called the Grizzly Bear to be their Great Father; for they said the Buffalo are yet plenty beyond the great river, and he will send the red man away there to hunt them. And we will raise corn upon all his land. And one hand of the Great Bear is lead—and he has laid it upon his red childred heavily. But he has another hand of iron; and when the red men are ground down to the dust with the weight of the leaden hand, then will he lay the hand of iron upon his own children, and they will groan with the weight. And behind the Bear, smelling in his footsteps, cometh the Fox. He is a weak animal. He will not lift the heavy hands of the Bear from his white nor his red children. After the Fox, will come a great War-Chief. He has smote the red man when in war—but when he comes to be their great White Father, he will do them good. I will live to look up from beyond the great river and see that day, and then will I die in peace." "But my brother, I replied, will not go away. This is his land, and he will live and die upon it, and be buried with his fathers." "No. The little Father at Chicago, has sent me a talk that the white men who bought our lands have spoken with a forked tongue—and I cannot have my land here. The paper that it was marked on, does not speak as I spoke. I will have no other; I will go away. I wanted to stay until the white fawn came to seek the grave of her father, and take away his talk from the rock. But the good Manito does not listen, and I cannot stay until she comes. I cannot leave the talk there—white men will steal. Yesterday they were there and scraped away the moss that hid the cedar wood. To-morrow, or when I am away, they will come and whittle away the wood, and carry away the talk. I will take it away and put it in your hands, and you shall

keep it until the white fawn comes, for I know she will come. A white owl came last night and sat upon the cedars over the grave, and spoke three time. 'Twas to tell him that sleeps there, that after three snows more, his child would come." "But, perhaps," said I "she will come sooner. Perhaps the voice of the owl was to waken him, to tell him that his child was coming there. Perhaps she is coming now. I will go out again and speak to my Manito, and inquire when she will come." Knowing that the Indians were in a proper mood to produce an effect upon them, I determined to have a little dramatic scene. I had heard the wagon approaching before I went out, but then all was still. I stepped over a little knoll and found the party waiting word from me. I soon arranged business with them and returned to the wigwam. "What says the Manito?" "He says"—and I stopped and filled our pipes again—"he says that if ever you see her who wears the ring, you will see her after this pipe is burnt out, and before the smoke has blown away"—and again we sat in imperturbable silence—and again we filled the wigwam with smoke. The old squaw, I believe, fully expecting to see what her eyes had so long and anxiously looked for in vain, brought out the ring and sat rubbing it, and chanting a low hymn or prayer to propitiate the Good Spirit to smile on her at this time. At length the old man knocked the ashes from his pipe, and looked anxiously at me—then at the fast receding smoke—then all eyes were turned towards the blanket that formed the door, as a slight rustling sound was heard outside.—At this moment I gave the blanket a sudden jerk, and there stood the "white fawn," her right hand, upon which was that magic ring, extended towords the group, and by her side stood Western, whose form and features were instantly recognized as the white stranger who had listened to their tale at the treaty of Tippecanoe, and there promised to search the wide world through, until he found the wearer of that ring, and brought her to them. How little did he then expect, ever to hear the wild shouts

of joy that now rent the air and rang piercing through his ears.

Reader—you can finish this tale. The Will which you have read—the marriage certificate which was lost, were found. The ring which bound the plighted faith of Indiana to Western, graced her finger; and that, that late was there, is now a holy relic in an Indian wigwam, far beyond the Mississippi.

Fortune Atwater died, as many a "spoiled child" has died before—a sot. His Attorney still disgraces the profession he belongs to. Scott has made his WILL, as reader, I hope you will do. Part of the old Indian's prophesy in regard to our "Great Father," has already come to pass. That the rest of it may speedily come to pass, is "the last Will and dying request of a

"CITIZEN OF INDIANA."

FEMALE INFLUENCE

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 1:29; Apr., 1841]

[March 4, 1841]

FEMALE INFLUENCE.—[1]There is another error, a fatal error, into which your Society,[2] like their thousand and one predecessors, have fallen.

Vain and foolish man! Hast thou forgotten that thou wert born of woman? Are not the farmers' wives and daughters suitable and proper members of Agricultural Societies?

I hope your Society will take an early opportunity to amend this error. Enlist the female portion of society in your cause—enroll them honorary members. Have a suitable medal, or engraved certificate of membership prepared, that will make them anxious and proud to pos-

[1] Robinson showed an appreciation of women's rights in advance of many of his contemporaries. Possibly he was influenced by the writings of Frances Wright, which Von Schweinitz mentions having seen in his cabin at the town of Solon in 1831. *Journey . . . to Goshen, Bartholomew County, in 1831*, 233-34.

[2] Union Agricultural Society, of northeastern Illinois.

sess it, and you will soon see the good effects. If they do not take an active part in the business of the association, they will form "a power behind the throne, greater than the throne itself." They will attend your meetings, and listen to your addresses; and they will make such meetings "popular"—and can you effect any good unless they are popular?

In my address, which I hope to have the pleasure of delivering before your Society next month, I shall assume "the grey head's privilege," although it belongs to me more from looks than years, and *lecture* you further upon this subject. And I most earnestly hope that a goodly portion of my hearers will be composed of "man's first and best gift of Heaven." No word shall be heard among the few that I will use on that occasion, to offend the ear of female delicacy. * * * * * * * * * *

SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

ODDS AND ENDS.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:114; July, 1841]

[March 28, 1841]

REFINED *vs.* COMMON SUGAR.—It is worthy of inquiry, whether it would not be more economical to use more refined sugar in our families. Common brown sugar is generally about two-thirds the price of refined. For many domestic purposes, I am satisfied that refined sugar is the cheapest. Will some one better acquainted with the subject, give us their opinions?

MAPLE *vs.* CANE SUGAR.—What is the relative strength in saccharine, between common brown sugar and common maple sugar? It is the prevailing opinion that the cane sugar contains some 25 per cent the most saccharine matter. Is it so? Will some one who has the means of trying the experiment, do so, and report facts?

[1] The editor, in a lengthy comment on the extract of Robinson's letter which he published, avowed the "most exalted opinion of the supremacy and magic influence of female sway," and approved the suggestion that women be made honorary members of the Union Agricultural Society.

SUGAR *vs.* PORK.—If sugar and pork are the same price, which is the cheapest food for a family? Many persons who buy their meat, are excessively penurious in their purchases of sugar, under the impression that they cannot afford it. I am confident that they are mistaking their own interest. Besides, sugar, particularly for children, is a much more healthy diet. That is, when not used to excess.

CHANGE OF DIET.—This is a subject upon which by far too little attention is paid. Human aliment is often productive of health or sickness, and consequently of human happiness or misery. Children in particular, require a constant change; but the change should be a judicious one. I wish that many of the able medical men who read your paper, would make communications to it upon the subject of human diet.

WASHING BUTTER.—I venture to assert without fear of contradiction, that no family eat sweeter butter than mine, either new or old, and my wife always washes her butter thoroughly in cold water. The object of washing butter is to divest it of all the particles of buttermilk. If the cream or milk has made *bonny-clabber,* there will inevitably be small particles of it distributed throughout the whole mass of butter, and unless they are entirely removed in some way, that butter will most certainly become rancid. Working the butter in cold water will dissolve all these particles of congealed milk, and the water is easily worked out, or should a few drops remain, it will unite with the salt and form pure brine. If there is any other manner by which the butter can be freed from the milk more easily, I should like to know it.

My butter, although "spoil'd by washing it," when packed in a pot or keg, with a clean cloth pressed on the top, and a little brine on the top of that, say half an inch deep, will keep a year, as sweet as ever unwashed butter was, is, or can be kept in any manner whatever. These are facts. Now let us have the facts in opposition to the cold water system.

I do not wonder that so many object to washing butter, for it is a lamentable fact, that there is a great antipathy existing against the use of cold water, either as a beverage, or for ablution.

TEA AND COFFEE.—Will somebody tell me what is the value of these articles, as diet? Will somebody tell me whether the use of tea and coffee adds to our health or happiness, or length of life, or whether we enjoy our meals any better than we should do if we had always been accustomed to drink water?

CHESS.—[See Dictionary signification.]—"A difficult and abstruse game." "Abstruse—hidden, obscure, difficult."

Now, if we did not know that the lexicographer intended to explain the meaning of the *game of chess*, the readers of the agricultural papers for a year or two past would suppose that he had intended it to allude to the abstruse game of disputation, that has been carried on about chess, and upon which, I presume, that a majority of the readers have come to the conclusion, that the subject is a very abstruse one.

CURING AND PRESSING CHEESE.—A neighbor of mine has been in the habit for several years of stacking his cheese in a hay stack. He takes them as soon as they become firm, and making the stack some three or four feet from the ground, as smooth and level as it can be, puts on a course of cheeses, being careful that they do not touch each other, or come too near the edge, and then builds on the hay two or three feet, and then another course of cheeses. In this situation they finish curing, and are preserved from frost until spring. The plan is new to me, but perhaps not so to your readers. At all events, it is worth trying. I would recommend any person, however, to try it only on a small lot at first, until he satisfied himself personally that the plan is a good one.

SHEARING LAMBS.—I have satisfied myself by experience, that it is not profitable to shear lambs.

OYSTER PLANT, OR SALSIFY.—It is surprising that so few persons cultivate this delicious vegetable. They are planted and cultivated similar to carrots or parsneps, and like the latter, may be suffered to remain in the ground through the winter, and dug in the spring as soon as the frost is out of the ground. They are cooked in different ways. One is to boil them in clean water, and mash them and mix with flour into batter and fry them. Another, to cut them up in small mouthfuls, and after boiling soft, make a gravy of flour, butter, &c. and add to them, and really they are a rich substitute for oysters.

SCHOOL BOOKS.—There is a criminal fault existing in community, not only in the quality of the matter of school books, but in the manner that they are printed. I have of late observed several school books, printed with a very small type, upon poor blue looking paper, and in every particular bore a near relationship to "Pindar's Razors." No good man would be guilty of publishing such books for the use of children. It is a down right robbing of their honest rights. It is sufficiently painful for a child to learn to read out of good round fair print. To illustrate, I beg you to put this article in such type as should only be used for children's reading books. It is of no consequence that it takes more paper. That article is cheap, and for school books, should always be of the best quality. And I hope every man who reads this article, will hereafter reflect when about to purchase, that in buying one of these made-to-sell cheats, he is about to do a positive wrong to his child. Buy none but the best. See that the type, paper, and binding are good. And finally, be assured that this good advice is given by one ardently devoted to the cause of education and human improvement, and your old Indiana friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., March 28, 1841.

American Society of Agriculture.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:86; May, 1841[1]]

[April 1, 1841]

An address to the farmers of the United States; to every friend of agricultural improvement; to every citizen of the United States who desires to see elevated the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil.

Most respected and most respectable friends and brothers, give me your attention for a few fleeting moments; your humble brother, who now addresses you, published a suggestion about three years ago, for the purpose of arousing your attention to the subject of forming a National Agricultural Society; that suggestion was then responded to with a hearty good will throughout the country. But action upon the subject has been overwhelmed by the political whirlwind that has swept over our country. In the first lull of the succeeding calm, the proposition to form such a society has been renewed, and with one exception, has met with a cheering "God speed the project." None doubt the utility of the proposed society, yet doubtless there are many who would like to see the object, end and aim of the society more fully explained. To such I now offer some of my views, and in doing so, invite you all to give yours; for this is one of the objects of a National Society to interchange our views.

Many warm friends of the measure, who are anxious to see the society in operation, cannot see how it is to be organized. They say, "No doubt if once organized, it would daily increase in strength and usefulness; but it is like a great complicated piece of machinery, of great use and value when once in motion, but difficult to start." Now, to me there is no difficulty in the way. All that is wanted is a few active engineers to put the machine in

[1] Printed also in Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 2:168a-68b, an extra (April, 1841); in *ibid.*, 2:171-73 (May, 1841); and in *New Genesee Farmer*, 2:83 (June, 1841).

motion. Immediate and decided action of a few of the active friends of agricultural improvement, who must assume the responsibility to act as engineers as well as pioneers for the whole Union; and having once given the society an existence, it will flourish and increase in strength just as our political Union has done.

The following plan of organizing the society is suggested to your consideration:

Let as many of the friends of the project as can be induced to do so, meet at the city of Washington, on some day of the autumn of 1841, (the particular day to be hereafter fixed,) and there form a constitution for the society, and elect officers, to wit: a president, a vice president for each state, a recording secretary, a general corresponding secretary, and a corresponding secretary for each state, county, city and principal town in the United States, a treasurer, and probably a publisher of a national paper, to be called the Journal of the American Society of Agriculture.

The first officers will hold their offices until the next annual meeting, which should be held at the capital of that state which had furnished the greatest number of members at the time when the president of the society should issue his proclamation to convene the second meeting.

The place of each annual meeting should be fixed at the preceding one, in some state other than the one where it was then held, so as to give the members in each state an easier opportunity of attending.

As in the formation of all such associations it is necessary to have some cash funds, are you willing to donate "a mite" to accomplish this great national object?

If so, an opportunity will hereafter be offered you to do so. Upon some of you I hope to make a personal call for that purpose, should it be thought advisable, after due reflection, to proceed in the organization; therefore, I pray you to give this subject your serious consideration.

If you should aid in the formation of this society, will not your children "rise up and bless you?" For one of

the first objects of the National Agricultural Society should be to connect with it a "National Agricultural School."[1]

Not such a "National School" as is the only one we now have, which has, with too much truth, been called "a nursery of aristocracy"—where the humble son of a farmer is rarely admitted, and if admitted, what is he taught? Not how to cultivate his mother earth, and make her sons glad; not how to increase life, but the art of destruction, the trade of blood!! Such is now your only national school.

Such will not be the only one, in a few short years, if you will lend your energies to form a National Society, whose motto will be, "to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil." For when once organized, you will soon show a united force of many thousands, whose voice will be heard in the halls of congress, demanding our birthright. Be assured we shall be heard. "Let all our energies be concentrated, and we can do any thing in the power of man; but divided and scattered as we are, we spend our forces, as it were, drop by drop; whereas, *union would make us mightier than a torrent.*" We *can*, shall we say we WILL form such a torrent as will overwhelm our political rulers, unless they will do justice to the agricultural class of the community.

As soon as the National Agricultural Society is formed, let us ask Congress to appropriate the "Smythsonian fund" of half a million of dollars to establish a National School. If we unite as we should do, our "torrent" will be too strong for time-serving politicians to resist.

I look upon the National Agricultural School as the greatest blessing to flow from the National Society.

[1] Francis H. Gordon, of Clinton College, Tennessee, in a letter of January 2, 1841, to the editors of the *Cultivator*, suggested connecting a national agricultural school with the proposed national agricultural society. *Cultivator*, 8:52 (March, 1841). James M. Garnett seconded the proposal in a letter of March 16, 1841. *Ibid.*, 8:79 (May, 1841).

But the Journal of the Society will also prove of immense advantage. It will embody a vast amount of matter, useful and interesting to every cultivator in the Union. The most carefully prepared tables of the productions of the earth, from every section of the Union, will be kept constantly before the reader, totally different from those vehicles of deception, and often fraud upon the farmer, called "prices current." It is by the quantity produced, and the probable demand therefor, that we can understand whether it is for our interest to sell our crops now, or store them up. At every meeting there would be numbers from every state in the Union, as ready to impart as receive information.

"All the inducements of the business of a National Society, a National Fair, and a National School," and the honor of being a member of such a society, would be enough, I think, to make us all feel that it would be a greater honor to be elected a state delegate to one of the annual meetings of the National Society than to be elected a member of Congress.

It cannot be expected in this short address, that I should point out all the good that would flow from the action of the proposed society. But if we are convinced that the effect would conduce to the interest and happiness of the great mass of agriculturists of the Union, let us act, and with spirit too.

And now, my friends, one and all, do you approve of the plan of organization? Speak out boldly if you do not. And if you do not object, the leading friends of the measure will fix upon a day for the first meeting, and proceed in the manner proposed.

There has been an argument raised against organizing such a society at present, "because the public mind has not been sufficiently instructed, and does not sufficiently appreciate the advantages of such an association to render it successful."[1]

[1] See editorial in *Cultivator*, 8:27 (February, 1841).

Now it is on this very account that the friends of the proposed National Society wish to see it established, that the operations thereof may wake up an excitement throughout our "wide scattered population," that shall be the moving cause of changing the "condition of the country."

It is also argued that the failure of several state and county societies is proof that a national one must fail also.

Let me ask if this is a valid argument? This short quotation, in my mind, is sufficient to knock the whole force of the argument into nonentity: "Divided and scattered as we are, we spend our forces as it were, drop by drop, whereas UNION would make us mightier than a torrent."

The object of all state and county societies has been of a local nature. Their existence has been known only in their own locality, and they have been too weak in numbers to command legislative aid. Who can tell what would have been the effects if all the members of all the local societies in the Union had been attached to one National Society? If all the exertions of all these societies, collectively and individually, had been concentrated upon one object, would it not have formed a "torrent" as mighty, comparatively speaking, as the thundering Niagara. If the nation, instead of individuals, had received all the light of the intelligent minds that have been devoted to these local societies, would it now be said "that the public mind was not sufficiently enlightened to appreciate the advantages to be derived from a National Society?" If all the money that has been devoted "drop by drop" upon "model farms" and local schools had been concentrated, should we not now have an institution worthy the great country we inhabit?

If our population is scattered; if "long distances intervene between the most efficient friends of agricultural improvement," so much the more need of forming such a

society as shall draw them together in "one strong bond of brotherhood."

Is it a fact "that the time has not yet arrived when such an association can be organized with a reasonable certainty of success?" If such is the fact, I am disappointed in the character and energy of my countrymen.

Once more I call upon you to answer me this question; am I so disappointed in your character?

Do not refuse your countenance to the measure because it does not originate in high places. For "if we are ever to have a National Society of Agriculture, it must be got up by the farmers themselves;" & as one of that class I now address you.

If the present attempt at organization fail, the matter may be considered as decided for the present generation.

The only question then is, shall the matter sleep until you and I are past waking?

I am a devoted friend to present organization of a National Society of Agriculture, and a National School, *that will elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil,* And your friend and brother,

Lake C. H., Ia., April 1, 1841. SOLON ROBINSON.

A JOURNEY CONTEMPLATED.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:100-1; June, 1841]

[April 2, 1841]

MESSRS. GAYLORD & TUCKER—I now have it in contemplation to make an extensive agricultural tour during the coming summer, and it would be a great pleasure to me, and I have reason to believe it would be equally so to some of your readers, to form a personal acquaintance with them as far as practicable; and as I shall "take notes," and you will "print them," it may also conduce to our mutual improvement. I have, therefore, thought proper to make this public announcement of my intention and route. All communications addressed to me before the 1st of August, at this place, upon the subject of the

journey, or requiring business done on the route, will be attended to. I shall also be glad to communicate with the friends of agricultural improvement at the following places, and I shall call upon the following named persons, with whom any information for me may be left, viz: Friend Willets,[1] Editor of Indiana Farmer, Indianapolis; Hon. John Sering,[2] Madison, Ia.; Thos. B. Stevenson, Esq., Editor Kentucky Farmer, Frankfort; Messrs. Affleck[3] & Hopper,[4] Editors Farmer and Gardener, Cincinnatti, O.; Hon. H. L. Ellsworth,[5] Commissioner Patent Office, Washington; James M. Garnett, Essex co., Va.;

[1] See *post*, 244-45. Jacob S. Willets, coeditor with J. W. Osborn, and later editor, of the *Indiana Farmer*, Indianapolis, 1837-1841; thereafter general agent in Indiana for the Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*. Corresponding secretary, Indiana Horticultural Society. See *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 2:168 (April, 1841); letter to John B. Niles, March 24, 1841, in Niles Papers, Indiana State Library. In 1840 Willets opened a school for girls and small boys at his home in Indianapolis. *Indiana Farmer*, n. s. 1:86 (June, 1840).

[2] John Sering settled in Madison in 1810 or 1811. Proprietor of one of the first stores, and owner of first cotton mill. Postmaster, 1818-1843. Cashier of Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank. Agent for state, for a time, on Madison and Indianapolis Railroad. In Indiana senate, 1828-29 to 1831-32. *Indiana Magazine of History*, 6:145, 147; 12:224, 229; 16:318; "Hoosier Listening Post," in *Indianapolis Star*, February 28, 1928.

[3] Thomas Affleck, born July 13, 1812, in Dumfries, Scotland; died December 30, 1868. Editor of Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*, and other agricultural papers. Prominent planter in Mississippi and Texas. Operated the first sawmill and gristmill in Texas. Interested in meat packing. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 1:110-11.

[4] Edward James Hooper, editor of the *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 1839-1840, 1844-1845. Horticulturist and author of *Hooper's Western Fruit Book* (Cincinnati, 1857).

[5] Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, born November 10, 1791, in Windsor, Connecticut; died December 27, 1858. Lawyer, agriculturist, businessman, and politician. First United States commissioner of patents. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 6:110-11. A description of his Indiana farm will appear in volume 2 under the heading "Western Agriculture—Corn Cobs," July, 1847.

G. B. Smith,[1] Esq., Baltimore, Md.; James Pedder,[2] Philadelphia, Pa.; P. Sather,[3] Esq., Broker, 164 Nassau-street, New-York. I shall also visit Stonington, Ct.; Providence and Boston.

At Albany I shall not only see you, gentlemen, but, I trust, many good friends. Returning, I shall visit Utica, Rochester, and at Buffalo, *sans ceremonie,* I shall invite myself to partake of the hospitality of A. B. Allen, Esq.

I hope to be able to give some information about matters and things in the West, to those of my agricultural brethren with whom I may chance to meet, and I expect to gather a great fund of useful information for my own use, and that of others, at some future time. Among other things, I intend to satisfy myself whether it is yet time to form a "National Agricultural Society."

I intend to take the journey at that season of the year when I can witness and compare the growth of crops between different sections, and see the improved stock to the best advantage, and I hope I shall have occasion to speak highly of every portion of the route. I remain with much respect,

SOLON ROBINSON, [Post-master.]

Lake C. H., Ia., April 2, 1841.

BERKSHIRE HOGS

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist,* 1:36; May, 1841]

[April 2, 1841]

BERKSHIRE HOGS.—Experience is an excellent teacher —as I have been taught a little I will impart it to others

[1] Gideon B. Smith, Baltimore, Maryland. Contributor to *Farmers' Register.* Editor of the *Silk Journal,* Baltimore.

[2] James Pedder, born July 29, 1775, in Newport, Isle of Wight, England; died August 27, 1859. From 1840 to 1843, editor of *Farmers' Cabinet,* published in Philadelphia; about 1844 became corresponding editor of the Boston *Cultivator* and in 1848, resident editor, which position he held until his death. See *Dictionary of American Biography,* 14:387-88.

[3] Peter Sather, uncle of an immigrant who died in Lake County and was buried near Cedar Lake. Ball, *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872,* 210-12.

engaged in breeding pigs. Great care is necessary with this breed, to guard against the temptation to use them too young. They are so large and fine at eight or ten months old, that many suppose they are plenty big enough to breed. It is a great mistake. The boar should scarcely be used until twelve months old, and then but sparingly until eighteen. A sow should never be allowed to have pigs until a year old, and then only in warm weather—and it would be better that they were sixteen months old—nature cannot be forced with impunity. The period of gestation in a sow is *exactly* sixteen weeks. Now of my experience—I had two sows last fall on the passage from Albany, got with pig at about four months old. On the first day of January, one of the coldest of the season, one dropped seven and the other two, and as the sows had little or no milk, and were too young to mind their pigs, all died in spite of all that human care could do.

Yesterday another sow, just one year old, dropped eight pigs. She is one of the kindest, most careful, and sensible hogs I ever saw; and as the weather is warm, the pigs are all as lively as could be wished. It is characteristic of Berkshires, that they are great breeders, and fine milkers. But do not be tempted to use them too young. But above all things, do not be tempted to do without them. SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., April 2.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered by SOLON ROBINSON, Esqr., *before the Union Agricultural Society, at Chicago, on the 28th April,* 1841.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist,* 1:36-37, 52-53; May, July, 1841]

My friends! or rather, I would say, brethren,—a blessed union of brothers, devoted to a blessed cause—to improvement in one of the most blessed pursuits on earth. And for that purpose you have united yourselves under

the excellent motto, "In union there is strength"—and your object, "to improve the soil and the mind." Well, in the language of the father of American freedom, "I know of no pursuit in which more real and important service can be rendered our country, than improvement in agricultural pursuits."

But before I proceed, allow me to explain why I, a stranger to most of you, have set myself up as a teacher among you. To many of you I am perhaps known by name, as one who is ardently devoted to that cause which shall tend to improve the condition, and elevate the standing of the cultivators of American soil. And although at all times willing to lend all my energies to that object, I reluctantly accepted the flattering invitation to address your Society, because I know my own ability. However capable of instructing or amusing my fellow-laborers with my pen, I am unused to *making a speech*—I therefore claim your kindest indulgence; my promise is not to make my present effort interesting, but only that "I will try."

You have met here, I hope, not for the sole purpose of listening to what the humble individual before you has to say, but for mutual instruction and improvement. Let us enquire then, how the greatest good can be done to the greatest number? If there is strength in your union, how shall that strength be used? Surely not for our individual aggrandizement. No! For I am morally certain, from my own knowledge of some of the leading individuals of your Society, that the great desire of their hearts is upon a scale as noble, and grand, and broad as the great plain which stretches away before us farther than the eye can reach.

Cast your eyes with me for a moment over this great natural field, and fancy if you can, what untold riches lie hid beneath its surface.

Is it not an object worthy the highest ambition of man, to lend his energies towards the promoting of a cause, the object of which is, to turn all this unproductive native

wildness into cultivated fields of golden grain, and to cover nature's great pasture with lowing herds, and consequently filling up this great space of wild waste, with a population of happy human souls?

This is what we now want. We want to transplant thousands of our hard-toiling brethren, who are sweating away their lives upon the old worn out hills of New England and Europe, and plant them in our great Western garden. And it should be one great object of this Society, to encourage emigration. Not in words alone, but our acts should tend to shew the great benefits to be derived. Plain true statements of the present condition of the country should be published. Show them the thousands of acres of land as rich as heart could wish, lying waste all over our country. It is true that the "first choice" is occupied, but what of that. Let industry and economy, such as may be seen upon the plains of Flanders, or among the bogs of Ireland, and cliffs of England, old or New, be devoted to the worst land in our country, and its occupants would soon become independent—or comparatively so; for absolute independence is neither attainable or desirable—all classes must live by and for each other. But there is a degree of comparative independence that the cultivators of a rich soil always may possess, and which is within the reach of every citizen of this Republic, who is of sound body and mind, and who has a disposition to claim it, particularly in a region where nature has made such ample provision for the new beginner. But there has, in my opinion, been a fatal error committed by many of the first emigrants to this country, in an over anxiety to accumulate too much of a good thing.

It is evident that no man can cultivate such large tracts as many have been anxious to possess, of such a soil as ours. It were better by far that our uncultivated lands were occupied by hardy and industrious laborers, whose every stroke of plough, hoe or spade, would add intrinsic value to it, than to lie dormant, waiting some

hoped for rise in value. It is a subject well worthy of our careful inquiry, whether our greediness has not driven many good citizens to look further, without faring better, while we have fared worse. Our settlements are too sparse, and we ought to use all honorable means to invite emigrants to fill up our waste lands. To do this we must be more liberal.

Scarce as timber now appears in our prairie country, if it could be fairly distributed, it would be sufficient to increase our population to ten times its present numbers. Is there any one will presume to doubt that that would fail to increase the value of land to ten times its present intrinsic value? And there are other benefits that would attend upon an increase of our population, which we cannot enjoy while dwelling so isolated, scattered over such a wide surface of country, which is far—far more important than boundless wealth.

I need not tell you what benefits I allude to; for the little monitor in the breast of every parent whose location has prevented him from partaking of the benefits of the village school, will speak to him in tones that he cannot keep still, and tell him that his children are growing up into manhood, destitute of the first rudiments of a common school education.

He cannot hide that "still small voice" with the soothing salvo to the mind of the miser, that he is "Lord of all I survey," while he stretches his eye over his vast domain of a thousand uncultivated and unproductive acres. Be assured, such a man owns too much land. It would have been far better for him, individually, and far better for society, if he had "claimed" no more land than he needed for cultivation, and that the remainder had been occupied by some of the thousand emigrants who have passed by in seach of a "wider opening" further West.

Are there any here who suppose that all this waste land will forever lie waste? Let them look back to their own native hills—there is no waste, and useless land there; and but a few short years would roll away into

eternity, before you might say the same of this country, if an enlightened and liberal course was adopted toward that numerous class who are destined to earn their bread under that primeval malediction upon Adam and his race.

I assert with the utmost sincerity of belief, that the Grand Prairie can, and will be eventually cultivated to good advantage, entirely without timber for fuel, fence, or building. The earth itself will afford the best and cheapest materials for the whole.

Do you imagine that this is too great a change—too improbable ever to be brought about?

Look back a few years. What was this country then? And what may it not be a century hence?

I fancy there are some here, who can look back to the time, for it is but a short stretch of memory, when the *City* of Chicago, consisted of yon little stockade, and its handfull of soldiers, and a few humble log cabins around it. And what has wrought this mighty magic change, in the little space of time comprised in the tenth of a century. Is it your most beautiful inland sea whereon rides those great castles moved by steam, which weekly float into your, I am sorry to say *unfinished* harbour? Is it the enterprise of your merchant princes, or princely merchants?

No—No. Allow me to impress it upon your minds, that all this wonderful change has been wrought more by that humble little machine, which, when a boy, I often went whistling after, than by all the wealth of merchants, or power of steam, or great facilities of navigation, though all these are auxiliaries to this wonderful magician's wand that has converted the wilderness into a city, in so short a space. And would you hear the name of this wonderful machine—it is the Plough. What would have been your city now, if it had not been for this magic wand of the husbandman? Why the sentinel would have still kept watch upon his post, to guard a few Indian traders against surprise from their customers. And occasionally a solitary vessel, wandering

over a waste of waters, would have cast her anchor opposite the mouth of your useless and unapproachable river, and after the tedious operation of discharging her little cargo, she would have gone away empty.

But the husbandman came and he looked upon an almost boundless extent of soil, which was not surpassed in fertility by the garden of Eden, and his arts soon drew forth the riches of the earth, and lo! in the place of the lowly cabins, up springs this great and growing emporium of the West. Husbandmen, brother farmers, let us take credit to ourselves, for that which is our due. Remember as you follow the plough, that if it had not been for that, and your humble occupation, the waving grass would have still continued to wave over all this vast field—this rich soil would have still remained unproductive and useless, and this now flourishing city would have been among the unknown things. This is the magic of agricultural improvement. What a mighty blaze hath a little spark kindled. Now, if you have the power to kindle such a blaze from so small a spark, what can you do if you lend your united strength to fan the blaze already kindled. While I am holding up the work of the magician's wand before you, let me carry you magicly forward for fifty years—a period that looks to those youths before me, almost interminable—but to yonder grey headed father, oh how short.

Can you fancy the time when the plough instead of the autumnal fires, shall have blackened all this green pasture—when the succulent corn and golden wheat shall move where now waves the coarse and useless prairie grass. Can you fancy to yourselves, that if the few little patches of cultivated ground within your district, can have been the moving cause of raising up all these fine mansions around us in the place of the Indian's wigwam, what will be the effect that will be produced when the whole of this vast expanse before us is brought under the dominion of the plough. Can you fancy to yourselves the time when all the buildings now composing this city,

would be hardly sufficient for store houses for the surplus grain of this fertile region? Sir, you need not look at me doubtingly. Will the change from the present to that time be so great as the change from the past to the present has been?

If the improvements in agriculture are permitted to go on—if the spirit that now animates the agricultural community—if the spirit that has brought us together this day shall continue to expand for a few years to come as it has for a few years past, your field will continue to expand—your city will continue to expand—your commerce will continue to expand—and you, my friends, yes, you within the short compass of your lives, will become the proudest key holders on earth—for you will hold the keys of the great granary of the world.

Am I enthusiastic? Is my picture over-wrought? There are some who will say so. For there are some who fancy that the world is now at the very height of perfection, and that in future, all things must retrograde. But there are those in this assembly that can follow my fancy through coming years, and thro' coming events. There are those here who never stop your mouth when you offer instructions upon their pursuits, with those potent words, "you can't tell me anything about farming. I want none of your book-farming about me." There are those here, who are not only willing to learn, but willing to impart such knowledge as they may posses, to their brethren. It was for the benefit of mutual improvement that your Society was formed. It is for that that you meet together. And there is nothing better calculated to promote agricultural improvements, particularly in a country so sparcely settled, as social intercourse: pleasant agreeable meetings. You become acquainted with one another. You learn something new. You, perhaps, become acquainted with some new and valuable agricultural implement. You see, and seeing is knowing, that there are improved breeds of cattle, sheep and hogs, particularly the latter. For no man, however blind and

prejudiced he may be, can look upon the beautiful Berkshire, without acknowledging that he is a superior animal to the long-nosed landpikes of our country.

I feel it to be my duty to urge the fact strongly to your notice here, that I am convinced that this is the first kind of stock that we should attempt to improve. Our country is new and mostly unprovided with comfortable shelters, and suitable keeping for an improved breed of cattle. And our pecuniary means are not generally sufficient to enable us to walk before we creep. But there is no farmer in the bounds of your Society, too poor to provide himself with a pair of pigs. And all have the means of comfortable keeping. And no one would hesitate one moment after he had become acquainted with the improvement. And the only way of making them acquainted, is for those that are already convinced, to take early measures to introduce them to the notice of their doubting neighbors. You may talk to a man until you are hoarse and he is deaf, or you may read to him until you are blind, about the good qualities of improved cattle and hogs, and, I know by experience, that it will not all have so much effect upon him as one view.

Since I have provided myself with Berkshire hogs, I have an easy argument, "Look for yourself." And none look and doubt. All are converted to the belief at once, that a Berkshire hog is no humbug. There are many other good varieties, that are a decided improvement upon the common kind. But all I wish to point out at present, is, that our stock of hogs can be improved easier than any other kind of stock while our country is so new as it is at present.

There are some too proud or obstinate, but few who are too wise to learn. And if you learn no other fact from me this day, I beg you to remember, that such meetings as this are well calculated not only to add to your general information, but to improve the morals of community. If then you had no other object in view, how important is it that you continue thus to persevere in well-doing.

Do not be discouraged because you see such a lethargy among the cultivators of the soil. It is so much the more your duty, who are awake to the true interest of our country, to endeavor to rouse up others. We are all creatures of excitement. We require something to stimulate us to action. Let the ambition to do good to your fellow-laborers stimulate you to excite others. You have already taken the first and most important step towards spreading knowledge among the agricultural community of Northern Illinois. You have established, and I ardently hope you will support, a spirited agricultural paper. There is nothing that can, that has, that will, still continue to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of American soil, to so great a degree as a general diffusion of papers among them, which are solely devoted to their pursuits.

It should then be a moving object with every member of this Society, to endeavor to diffuse these papers among the farming community. Every merchant and mechanic in this city, if he could see his own interest, would take an active part in all the objects of your Society. Improve the mind of the farmer, and he will add improvement to his farm. And every acre that is added to cultivation, adds wealth to the merchant and mechanic. For without the farmer, neither of them could exist. 'Tis true they are mutually dependent on each other, but agriculture is the base upon which all other occupations are dependent. But that pursuit has been neglected and degraded, and those who are engaged in it have been looked upon as an inferior portion of the community. Let it be our object then, to rescue this most noble of all professions from its degraded state, and give it a proper elevation in society. Let us endeavor by all means in our power, to convince our agricultural brethren who are inclined to look upon our efforts with jealousy, that our object is to benefit them.

Let me urge you to continue the meetings of your Society more frequently. Carry them into every county,

and use every means to get the people to attend and learn the object. You surely can always find volunteers to deliver an address, that will tend to lighten the weary toil of industry, and give an hour of instruction and amusement to an audience of farmers. But, above all things, let me urge this solemn fact upon your notice, that as you hope to prosper, you must interest the female portion of society. No cause can prosper without them. You have only to look at the political history of this country for a few years past to be convinced of that fact. It was the slander and abuse heaped upon the wife of Andrew Jackson, that enlisted female influence in his favor and placed him in the Presidential chair. It was because Martin Van Buren was a very good sort of a "ladies' man" that placed him there. And no good democrat will dare to doubt that it was female influence alone that elected him who had scarcely reached the pinnacle of glory, before the Great Leveler of all men, laid him as low as the most humble among us.

And without that same kind of influence, your Society might as well cease vain efforts, for I repeat, you cannot succeed. Secure her aid and your cause will triumph. Can you not offer sufficient inducements to them to secure their attendance at the meetings of your Society?

If the premature frostiness of age had not fixed a forbiding aspect upon me,[1] I would venture to suggest that the very name of your Society should act as a talisman upon the minds of the younger portion to induce them to come forth. They too, may here find inducements to form such a "union," as no society can exist without.

I think, that if you would make your meetings popular, that your speaker and his subject should be selected as well to instruct and amuse the fairer portion of creation, as those who style themselves "lords," and too often "lord it" over the weaker class of their fellow creatures.

[1] Solon Robinson had red hair which turned white before he was thirty. At the time of this address he was thirty-seven.

I very much regret that I have not the fire and energy of youth, or at least the power to make myself more interesting to this goodly number of my fair hearers, who have complimented me by their presence here to-day.

But permit me to assure them, that although I may be lacking in the soft blandishments of a "ladies' man," I am a husband and a father, and I sincerely hope I am a philanthropist; and until I forget the love and duty that I owe to the former, and my anxiety to promote the latter, may I never forget the pleasure that the smiles of beauty have afforded me this day.

Gentlemen, I beg you to be assured of the solemn truth which used to be a guiding text of the celebrated John Randolph, that, "if we were deprived of the influence of female society, we should soon degenerate into a mass of brutes." And in this country, where our scattered population are deprived of many opportunities to enjoy such society, it should be one of the leading objects of this Society, to promote and foster that holy, happy influence.

You should also bring your children with you. Teach them while young. Remember that early impressions are almost indelible, and, therefore, be careful that what they see and hear should be of the right kind.

At the exhibitions of the stock and farming implements, and farm products, and household manufactures, their young curiosity will be particularly excited, and their minds impressed with useful things.

In your list of premiums, you may usefully add a few, particularly calculated for competition among the youths of your Society.

But above all, do not forget to be truly liberal in your offers to induce a laudable competition among your wives and daughters.

I would particularly recommend that your most liberal offers should tend to the encouragement of the manufacture of household cloth, and don't let them forget that they may still appear lovely in a homespun dress, of wool, flax, or silk.

Although it is not expected that they are going to take an active part in the dry details of your business operations, I do say, and I say it with the utmost seriousness, from the strong convictions of experience, that one enterprising woman engaged in our cause, will do more to promote the objects which this Society has in view, than ten ordinary men.

And certainly there is no part of the community more deeply interested, than the wives and daughters of farmers. We wish to make them feel the importance of their station in society. We wish to elevate the whole agricultural community to that degree, that they shall feel proud of the name of "farmer's wife." We wish to see our girls so educated that they never will blush to hear themselves called "farmer's daughters."

Let it be an object dear to the heart of every member of this Society, to weed out every vestige of that feeling which sinks the farmer below the very first grade of society. Let us constantly impress upon their minds that they hold the same relative position to all other classes that yon climbing orb does to the rest of our planetary system.

Withdraw the genial rays of the sun from our earth, and what a cold and useless world would it be. Let the humble tillers of the soil cease their operations, or let them cultivate only what would be barely sufficient for their own subsistence, and what would be the condition of all other classes of society? Can you not perceive that they are as dependant upon us as we are upon the sun? Can you not perceive that we are, and of right ought to be considered, the pillars and support of civilized society?

Why is it then, that such a false and unnatural state of things has existed, and does now exist, though to a less degree than heretofore, that makes us ashamed of our honest employment? Why do the farmer's daughters seek to connect themselves in that most holy of all connections, with those who are strangers to the ways of

their father's household? Why do the farmer's sons seek to escape from their healthy occupation, and spend the bloom of their life at an employment only fit for some delicate female, measuring tape and calico behind the merchant's counter, or perhaps stooping over the physicians' mortar, and crowding into every class and kind of employment, and often into no employment at all, while the rich and teeming earth is ever inviting them to dig for a golden treasure that is always found by them that seek? 'Tis because a false estimation has been placed upon the different classes of society. False education, and pernicious ideas of respectability, have been permitted to flourish to the great detriment of the whole body public.

"The youth of our day, unlike the ancients, seem to count it an honor to be delicate and effeminate, rather than hardy, manly, and daring in the field of enterprise and usefulness" which should be their highest ambition, thus to seek deserved honor and fame.

I do most earnestly assure you that I am fully convinced that here lies the first stumbling block in the way of improvement in agriculture. 'Tis a universal blight that has fallen upon the farming community. 'Tis the effect of a false and pernicious system of education, or rather a total want of such an education as is fit for the cultivators of the soil. By the term education, I do not mean solely what is taught within the school-room; but what is taught by the existing state of society; and by which many of our youth are brought up in the way *they should not go.*

"There is a vast room for amendment in our character as a people; and, although the improvement of agriculture, as an art and a science, is the chief object of this Society," it may usefully devote somewhat of its attention to the improvement of the farmer, as a man and a citizen. "Too little attention has been bestowed on this department, even by the agricultural press." "Let the farmer be aroused to take a higher view of his own dig-

nity and character, and be urged to appreciate more highly his own importance, both as a cultivator of the soil, and as a citizen. Let him apprehend more correctly, his own right and duties, and interests, as a member of the great producing class of community, and he will soon take that action which will result in improving the whole country." To effect this great and good moral reform, you must begin with the rising generation.

You must look into your school-houses.—There is the proper place to begin to cultivate the mind.

Verily, it is a truth, that "the schoolmaster is abroad." Our good old teacher has been abroad of late years, in truth, and sadly has his place been filled with those who have taught us aught but such lessons as our ancestors were wont to learn.

Oh! what a field of usefulness invites cultivation from your Society. One of the first steps we should take, should be to bring about a better system of education. A system, suited to, and suitable for the agricultural class. Were can you now send your children to learn to be farmers? Numerous schools and colleges exist, but what do they teach? Divinity, law, physic, and foppery!!! But where, and echo answers, where, are your agricultural schools? Do your common district schools even, ever teach the first rudiments of the first lesson, that civilized man must learn?—That is, to till the earth. What are your common school books? Is a treatise upon the most useful science in the world, ever found in your school-room? Let my answer wound no man's feelings, for the fault is not his, but that of a faulty education.

Your teachers are too often young men whose false education has taught them that it is disgraceful to work; whose pride compels them to seek such genteel employment as will enable them to flourish a little season of a butterfly existence; and they are too often employed to teach your children, solely because they will do it cheap. Under such circumstances, will your children grow up to

a life of usefulness? Your exertions to improve your stock and your farms are praiseworthy. Does it ever occur to our minds that we might improve ourselves? Is it not necessary for us to try to improve our system of education? Cannot your Society engraft a model school upon your proposed model farm? Surely it is a subject worthy of your serious consideration.

Cannot we improve the present taste and fashion of society? Here let me read a short extract from a journal called the "New York Mechanic."

"Ma, why were those men turned out of the assembly room last night?

"Because, my dear, they belong to the lower class: the one being a farmer, and the other a mechanic.

"But ma, I thought the farmers were the most useful people in the world, and that all other people were dependent on them for the means of living.

"True, my child, they are *useful* people, but they have to work for a living, and the assembly was composed of the rich, or, at least fashionable people who do not have to work. And besides, farmers are not in general so refined in their manners, as the lawyers and merchants.

"But why was the mechanic turned out seeing he was very polite and well-dressed.

"It was for the reason that he belongs to the lower class, and works for a living as I mentioned before.

"But I suppose, Ma, that nearly all the articles of which their splendid supper was composed, were procured from the farmers; and I am sure that nearly every thing else which they had in the hall, the furniture, decorations, and even the raiment of the company, and the hall itself in which they danced, was produced by mechanics. If, then, the first class of people are so entirely dependant on the farmers and mechanics, with what propriety can they set themselves up so much above them, and exclude them from their society?

"That, my dear child, is a privilege which the rich and fashionable have always enjoyed from time immemorial,

and will never be induced to relinquish it. And as they control a large proportion of the property and money of the community, and the farmers and mechanics are dependant on them for patronage and employment, they claim the right of superiority and exclusiveness.

"But, suppose now, Ma, that all the farmers and all the mechanics should combine and agree that they would not work for, nor sell anything to the fashionable class, how long do you think they would maintain their superiority? or what course would they take?

"The presumption is, at least, that such a thing will never occur, because the working classes are too fond of the money which they are continually receiving from the rich, to willingly offend them; but if such a thing *should* take place, I suppose the rich and fashionable would also combine, and by their superior influence in the government, they would immediately procure a law to be passed, by means of which they would take the produce of the farmer by force, and would compel the mechanics to work, or punish them by imprisonment, or otherwise, for their obstinacy.

"But as the farmers and mechanics constitute a very large majority of the population of the State, why could they not elect such men to represent them in their legislation, as would favor their cause, and prevent the passage of any such laws?

"The difficulty in doing this, would be as at present, a want of unity and concert. The rich understand this, and by the influence of their money, and concert in their actions, they always contrive to procure the election of men of the first class, so that all, or nearly all, of the laws that are enacted, are calculated to strengthen their systems of influence, and keep the working classes continually in a state of partial subjection. Poor people, and those in moderate circumstances, are prone to court the favors of the rich, and instead of helping to build each other up, are found pressing each other down, and will frequently favor the cause of the rich against that

of one of their own class. It is not so with the rich: he is never known to favor the cause of a poor man against the rich; and on this circumstance principally depends the safety of the first class, in the attitude which they have assumed, relative to the working classes, and which there is not, nor is there likely to be, sufficient concert and unity among the working classes to remove or overthrow."

Now, is there not "straight forward common sense" in that? But are you willing to acknowledge that "farmers and mechanics are the lower class" of society?

Are you "afraid to offend the rich and the fashionable?" Who made them rich and fashionable? Who gave them the right to assume to themselves all the honors, profits, and magnificent enjoyments of "fashionable life?"

Does the God of nature make envious distinctions, and decree that he who cultivates the earth shall bow himself a slave to him who reapeth where he soweth not? Is it wrong that the cultivators are compelled by the decrees of "fashionable society," as now constituted, to stand aloof, nor dare to show their faces in the wedding chamber, because their backs are not covered with a proper wedding garment?

If what the present state of society called the "first class," are so entirely dependant on the farmers and mechanics, with what propriety can they set themselves up so much above them, and exclude them from their society?

Far, far be it from me to endeavor to set one class of society in array against another. Such is not my present object; but it is to call your attention to an existing state of things, and then ask you if we have not the power to apply the remedy.

And the remedy that I would apply, is not to pull down that class of society to our level, but to build ours up. Let us by all possible means endeavor to elevate the character and standing of every cultivator of American

soil. And every good man in society, will certainly lend us his aid to accomplish so desirable an object. The first step to be taken by those most actively engaged in this work, must be to gain the confidence of that class of society that we would benefit. The next, to raise the standard of education, and furnish them with the means of improving their minds, by increasing the circulation of agricultural journals among them.—But above all things, to teach them to place more confidence in themselves. "The farmers and mechanics constitute a very large majority of the population of the State, why could they not elect such men to represent them in their legislation, as would favor their cause?"

"The difficulty in doing this, would be at present, a want of unity and concert."

Why have you called your Society, "The Union Agricultural Society," except it be for this very purpose?

Until such time, the farmer must look for but little Legislative aid. You must first make the pursuit of agriculture fashionable, and you will soon find votaries.

You must task your minds to the greatest effort, to weed out that pernicious blight that has fallen upon the agricultural community—that mania that pervades and fixes a disposition upon the minds of the farmers sons and daughters, to escape from the toil of cultivation of the soil, under the false and fatal delusion that any other employment, or even a life of idleness, is more respectable than that of their fathers.

Teach them that industry, honesty, and irreproachable moral conduct, is the true standard of respectability.

Wealth, dressed in silk and broadcloth, does not create worth. And here let me remark, that the same false notions of respectability, have produced ruinous consequences to the farmer, in the article of dress. How few of us are to be seen now-a-days, in a good substantial homespun coat. How many sheep, let me ask, are now within the limits of this Society? With a soil, unsurpassed in the world, in suitableness for flax and hemp,

who cultivates, who spins, who weaves their own family linen? None, or at least but few. And the reason why, is given, "that we can buy so cheap." True, the flimsy articles of the day, like Pindar's razors, *made to sell,* can be bought cheap. But who partakes of the profit of your surplus produce, that you must exchange for these cheap articles? 'Tis not the farmer. Rely upon it, if the farmer would be prosperous, his whole family must rely more upon their own resources. They must raise more wool and flax, and the banished spinning wheel must be again recalled. And in all things he must rely more upon his own exertion to improve his condition. He must take the conduct of his most vital interests into his own hands. It is idle to suppose, that legislation, as at present conducted, will ever be for his benefit. But there is a wonderful change coming over the farming community. Thousands are already aroused to think; and it is a characteristic of the farmers of our country, if they begin to think, they begin to act.

Your Society is the basis upon which *Union* will build a noble fabric. I entreat you to persevere until you rally around this little nucleus every good man, of every profession, within your chartered limits.

You have already done much, and you have much more to do, but you have much to encourage you. No doubt you can already see the fruit of the little seed which you undertook to cultivate a few months ago.

Let me once more entreat you to persevere. Your community are scattered over a wide field—strangers to one another—strangers to the country, even; and you can hardly imagine the good effects that will be produced by promoting acquaintance and friendly feeling, which can be done in no way that can be devised as well as by your frequent meetings. The farmers will soon become interested; your orators will find ready listeners; and all know that the matter of a public address sinks into the mind far deeper when heard from the speaker than when read.

I regret my own inability to do my subject and my audience justice, but you must take the will for the deed. Before I close, I have a few words which I earnestly wish I had sufficient power of eloquence to indelibly impress upon the mind of every youth in America. I earnestly wish that I could rouse up in your minds, the same degree of pride that now fills my bosom. No one would believe me, if I should assert that I do not feel proud of the honor this day conferred upon me. And why? Young man! you, the humble hard toiling son of a farmer, who feel, as you hear or read the effusions of eloquence and knowledge, and what you suppose to be long sought and hard gained learning, which you think is far beyond your means of acquiring, listen to me for one moment. Do you feel that you would be proud too, to occupy my present condition? Does your heart ever yearn after the means of acquiring that knowledge, which you deem entirely beyond your reach, and which you believe would tend to elevate your character and standing in society?

I do assure you, it is all within your own reach. No one of you were born in more humble circumstances, or spent or are spending a youth of harder toil, than I, an orphan-boy; and all the advantages that I ever possessed, are within the reach of every one. Bow down your mind to the determination to acquire sufficient knowledge to make yourselves useful members of society, and with the exception of only a few months of a common country school, your own firesides afford you all the facilities that I have had.

Oh, how much prouder should I feel, if at some future day, I might be able to listen to the eloquence of some one of the present youths of this Society, who had acquired the power to rivet the attention of such a respectable audience as have honored me with their attention this day, by the same unaided exertion of his own mind, and particularly if I should hear him say that he was induced to make that exertion by what I have here said to him, and that it had been the means of raising him to

that degree of honor and fame which is ever within the reach of him who will earnestly court the lovely Goddess of Learning, who is now hovering over your lowly cabin, with an open book in one hand, and a crowning wreath of Fame's bright flowers in the other, earnestly inviting you to peruse the pleasant pages of the one, and ever wear the fascinating enjoyment of the other.

There are many now before me, to whom nature and education has been more bountiful, and if I have been enabled to mount one of the steps of the temple of Fame, it is because I have been more persevering in self-exertion, in acquiring the ability to add to my own happiness, while I am endeavoring to do good to my fellow creatures, which I humbly hope I have done in some degree, this day. And as I hope to live, I hope to be blessed with the ability to do much more. And I most particularly hope that what I have here addressed to youth, may encourage them to exercise their abilities to acquire knowledge. Be assured it is not a toilsome task that I urge upon you. You will find it a path of roses. You will find pleasure increase with every step as you press onward. But you must never expect to reach that point beyond which you can go no farther. You may forever continue to ascend the temple of learning, without danger of reaching that point where you might stop and mourn that you could ascend no higher. And it is the first steps only that are rugged. The higher you ascend, the more easy is the way. The farmer's occupation, and the calm and quiet of a country fireside, are congenial to the developement of the human mind, and if we can arouse the youth to make sufficient exertion to overcome the first rugged steps, they will be sure to ascend till honor, fame and usefulness crown their efforts.—How great are the inducements of every enlightened member of society, to actively unite his efforts with ours in the great and good cause of human improvement.

I pray you to forgive the little egotism of my allusions to myself, for I have only done so to illustrate my argu-

ment, and endeavor to incite others to go and do likewise.

There are many now before me, who, by a little self-exertion, may raise themselves to a proud eminence, and from which they will often have occasion to look down with the same feelings of deep and respectful gratitude, for the respect and honor of their fellow-men, that I now do upon those before me.

And finally, my young friends, while you go on in improvement in agricultural pursuits, be careful also to improve your own minds. Provide yourselves with means of study. Make it a matter of pride, to subscribe to some agricultural or scientific journal. Club together in every village or settlement, and procure a small library. You will soon acquire an appetite for reading that cannot be cloyed.

There are many more things that I would gladly say, but I am fearful that I have already become tedious to my hearers.

I will close with the expression of a fond hope that I may be able to enjoy the privilege and pleasure of many more pleasant meetings with this Society: though rather as a hearer than a speaker.

And if you, my friends, have but a tithe of the same feelings that I now have, you will be well assured from this day's scene of the good effects to be derived from such social and pleasant intercourse together.

I assure you, that I shall leave you with the most lively and pleasant recollections of this day, and I humbly trust the remembrance of it, and of the new acquaintances and friendships here found, will ever remain as a pleasant memento in my mind, of one of the good things derived from "The Union Agricultural Society of Illinois."

Odds and Ends—No. 3.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:151-52; Sep., 1841[1]]

[July 15, 1841]

Post and rail fence, or board fence with posts set in the ground, can never be made to be durable upon our prairie land. The soil is so rich, deep and loose, that in the spring of the year the posts will be continually "on the lean." In my opinion, the best way to make such fence is to use posts with heavy butts sawed square and set on the ground, and make the fence crooked, like the common rail fence. It will be much more durable, and the loss of the land in the fence corners is a small item where land is so plenty and cheap as it is in the West.

"Sod Fence."

Upon this subject I have bought some wit—my conclusions are, that all attempts at fencing with sods, or banks of earth upon such a loose friable soil as ours, is buying wit too dear. The only fence that can be made of the earth, must be made *in* the earth. A deep well made ditch may answer a good purpose for a fence, and in almost all places, will be a lasting benefit to the land. But, eventually, the "Chinese system" must be adopted upon all of our large prairies. Whole tracts of country will be cultivated without fence. There are now upon the Connecticut river many thousand acres of land enclosed in one common field, and cattle when permitted to run at large are tended by a shepherd. The same plan must be adopted on the Western Prairies.

Secret of Soap Making.

Many persons are much troubled to make soap *come;* but there is no art or mystery or "luck" about the business. The whole secret consists in having strong lye—and it must be strong. If the ashes are clean, the soap

[1] Reprinted in Nashville *Agriculturist*, 2:248-49 (November, 1841).

will come without using lime. If the ashes are made from dirty chips, or burnt upon a clay hearth, lime in the leach at the rate of one quart to the barrel of ashes, may be used to great advantage. If lime cannot be procured, boil down the lye until there are coarse grains of salts in the bottom, then pour off the lye and *throw away the salts.* It will 'spoil your luck' to attempt to make soap with the salts in the kettle, for it is the salts of earth, not ashes. If your lye is strong, and you put in as much grease as it will dissolve, you will have soap whether it is put in hot or cold.

Flowers.

"Why is it that the love of flowers takes such deep hold of the heart?" Why! Why it is because they are the emblems of love. Show me one who does not feel his own heart expand as he watches the expanding beauties of some delicate flower, and you will show me one who knows nothing of that pure and perfect affection of the heart which binds the human family together. Teach your children to love and cultivate flowers.

Birds.

Next to the love of flowers is the love of birds.—Teach your children in mercy to spare the nests of the harmless little birds, and if you have a heart to be thankful, it will rise up in union with the little songster's carol, to think your lot is cast in such a pleasant vale of flowers and singing birds. These are some of the many things provided to lighten the toil of labor, and it is only a vitiated taste acquired from a false system of education, that prevents us from deriving a great deal of happiness from such small accompaniments of the journey of life.

Shade Trees.

What a singular and unaccountable strange thing it is, that those who settle in forests wage a war of extermination against every tree, not even leaving a single one for

shade for man or beast. Look at his log cabin, standing alone in the bright broad glare of sunshine, with nothing upon which the morning larks could perch but a stump near his window, to wake him with her cheerful cheering song.

What a perverted taste has that man who builds his house upon the open prairie, and for years lives on in his solitary black looking prison, with not a single green and waving branch to add to the look of cheerfulness and comfort to his abode. Is it possible that his children can grow up to be good citizens and never know the youthful luxury of a gambol under a green shade?

Reader, go plant a tree. And when the birds come and rest in its branches and pour forth their melody, it will be more soothing to thy mind than ever was that cup to which so many resort to sooth the cares and troubles of life, and which is the cause of sending so many to that dark shade from which they can see no gleam of sunshine, or have no lovely melody of the pleasure inspiring birds, or see the expanding beauties of the love inspiring flower. But teach your children to love these innocent sources of happiness, and they will have less temptation before them to seek pleasure where they will find ruin.

Lake C. H., Ia., July 15, 1841.

SOLON ROBINSON.

TO THE FRIENDS OF A NATIONAL AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

[Petersburg, Va. *Farmers' Register*, 9:476-77; Aug. 31, 1841[1]]

[July 24, 1841]

Fellow-Citizens:—The object of the present address is to ascertain whether there is, at this time, a sufficient number of the friends of this great measure in our Union willing to lend their influence to warrant the call of a primary meeting to organize such an institution. Should the indications appear favorable, a committee of the friends of the cause will take upon themselves the re-

[1] Reprinted from the *National Intelligencer.*

sponsibility of naming a time and place for the meeting.

We earnestly hope that some of you will promptly lend your own names, and procure a few others in your vicinity of such persons as desire to promote American Husbandry: and that you will transmit them by mail in time to reach Washington by the 10th of August, addressed to H. L. Ellsworth, esq., Commissioner of Patents, for Solon Robinson.

We remain, fellow citizens, your agricultural friends and humble servants,

SOLON ROBINSON, of Indiana.
JAMES M. GARNETT, of Virginia.

July 24th, 1841.

TRAVELING MEMORANDA—NO. 1.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:152; Sep., 1841]

Laporte, Indiana, Aug. 6, 1841.

EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—I am now fairly on my great Agricultural Tour. I left home yesterday. The roads are dry and fine, for we have had but little rain of late; yet crops have not suffered much. The wheat, of which there is an abundance of the very best quality, is nearly all in stack or barn, and many are already thrashing and getting it to market at 68 cts. a bushel, under the impression that it will be no higher.

Oats in the north of Indiana are not a full crop this year, but corn, potatoes, and other things, give great promise generally. It has been an excellent season for the farmer to secure his hay and grain. But few showers, and many cool days and nights.

You will recollect that last year we suffered an almost universal blight in wheat. A very few pieces are affected this year, and as a matter of course, a very large crop will be put upon the ground this fall.

There is a new improvement in the thrashing machine in operation here. The thrasher is mounted upon wheels, and is drawn through the field, and the bundles taken from the shooks, thrown into the machine, and the straw

scattered over the ground, the chaff blown out, and the grain deposited in a box, nearly clean enough for the mill, as the machine moves along through the field. It appears to operate well, and is a great saver of grain, time and labor.

The contrast between this "go ahead" way of getting out grain and the old fashioned flail, is not however so great as the contrast between this country now and ten years ago. Then, an Indian wild, an unbroken, broad waste of prairie and timber: Now, a succession of smiling fields, and happy homes of an industrious and thriving population.

Michigan City, often mistaken at the east for a Michigan town, is in this county. It is the only shipping port in the state of Indiana upon Lake Michigan. Vast quantities of wheat have been, and still more vast quantities of wheat and other products of one of the richest soils and most arable land in the world, of which the five or six contiguous counties are composed, will continue to be shipped from this port.

I am sorry to say that the farmers' prospects of realizing a profit upon pork this fall are very poor. So many packers lost money from their last fall operations, that but few will be tempted into the trade the coming fall. I am sorry for this, for I like to see the farmer well remunerated for his labor, and I am anxious that he should soon get rid of his land-pikes and alligators at such prices as will enable him to buy a better breed, of which there is a lamentable deficiency. The same remark is applicable to stock of all kinds.

But I must close and press forward on my long journey, and I hope I shall be able to meet with many incidents that will be interesting to those who have become familiar with the name of their old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

No. 2

Logansport, Ia., Aug. 8, 1841.

EDITORS CULTIVATOR—Under the new order of post office regulations, adopted by Postmaster-General Niles, the stage lays over here this day, (Sunday,) and to that you may ascribe the reason why you get a line from me now.

This town is situated upon the Wabash river, and the Wabash and Erie canal, now in operation from Lafayette (the head of steamboat navigation on the Wabash,) to Fort Wayne, passes directly through the heart of the town. There is also a large mill stream, called Eel river, empties in here, and that and the Wabash afford an immense mill power, which will at some day build up a great manufacturing town at this point. The land in the vicinity is of unsurpassed richness, covered in its native state with heavy timber; and owing to the fact that the land lately owned by the Miami Indians lies immediately across the river, the forest still remains in primeval grandeur. Over the rivers and canal are some fine bridges. The whole is one of the sudden, but here substantial, creations of the west. I find here a few, and compared with the numbers and wealth of the place, too few, subscribers to agricultural papers. The Cultivator, I believe, has the greatest number of subscribers; but instead of 20 it should be 200; and I most respectfully suggest to the citizens, that to make the circulation up to that number, would make the county of Cass $2,000 richer every year. There is not that attention paid to agriculture here that should be. There is a small society, but little action. Last fall, the society made a most laudable attempt to import a lot of Berkshire pigs. They were very unlucky. The pigs were landed in cold weather on the wharf at Chicago, and afterwards on the beach at Michigan City, and several of them either starved or froze to death, and those that came to hand have not done credit to the breed. The purchasers complain of the breeder, that he did not send a good lot, or else they

were too young, or badly put up, or something. At all events, it was a very unlucky piece of business for all parties concerned, and has tended to put back the improvement in hogs here for several years. From experience, I am bound to advise all my friends to order no pigs shipped to the west in the fall of the year, and to take none at any time less than 8 or 10 weeks old. It is charged against the dealers in Berkshires that they make sale of every living pig, and under the reputation of selling their own stock, that they buy up and send off some very inferior pigs. Such conduct is highly criminal, and I mention it here publicly, that if any person knows of such conduct, that he come out under his own name and state the facts. And on the other hand, that the breeders may be aware of the charges. Hogs are the first and most easy stock to improve, and I think the most important, particularly in this great corn country.

The crop of corn here this year will be much injured by a great drouth, which I am told, however, is much more severe farther south. Wheat is only raised for home consumption, as at present there is no outlet for it. Probably in the course of next year, the canal will be open to Lake Erie, when you will have the whole Wabash Valley in competition in the wheat market. Success attend it. It can be profitably raised here at 50 cents a bushel. Oats are much injured by the drouth. There will not be over half a crop. Hay is not *much* injured, because it is not *much* cultivated.

But I must not dwell too long on the way. So adieu to-day.

SOLON ROBINSON.

TRAVELING MEMORANDA—No. 3.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:163-64; Oct., 1841]

Madison, (Ia.) Aug. 12, 1841.

EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—The road from Logansport to Indianapolis, 70 miles, lies through a country of mostly level clay land, covered with a great growth of timber

and but little improved and the road less improved. In fact it appears as though the settlers of that region consider it a total loss to work upon the highway—at all events they build but few monuments to prove the contrary.

As I progressed south, I became more and more sensible of the effects of the severe drouth. In many places corn will not yield a bushel to the acre, and pastures and meadows, where such things happen to exist, would burn like tow.

There is a great defect in agricultural knowledge in this part of the world, or we should find more attention paid to the cultivation of grass and stock. Around Indianapolis, there are some slight indications of improvement in this respect. But the fact that an agricultural paper was not adequately supported at that place, proves that the country is more rich in soil than any thing else.[1] It is painful to learn that the agricultural society at the seat of government of such a state as Indiana, after struggling through a brief existence, now sleeps too sound to be awakened by the ordinary cries of a community suffering for the want of a better system of agricultural education.[2]

[1] See *ante*, 213, for a note on J. S. Willets, editor of the *Indiana Farmer*.

[2] In 1835 the General Assembly passed An Act for the encouragement of Agriculture, which set up a state board of five members appointed by the governor for five-year terms, and provided a formidable list of duties but no appropriation. The act provided that there should be held every December in Indianapolis, a meeting of the state board and delegates from the county societies, "to be known as the annual meeting of the state agricultural society of Indiana." *Laws of Indiana*, 1834-35 (general), 90-91. Willets, in the *Indiana Farmer*, n. s. 1:161 (January, 1841), said on the subject: "Five years have now elapsed since the passage of the law and the appointment of the state board. The board commenced their duties with a promptitude that deserves the praise of the community, and would have continued in active operation, had only a small sum been appropriated" to defray expenses. The February issue of the *Indiana Farmer*, n. s. 1:177-78, reported a

The editor of the Indiana Farmer, after having actually sunk his own small fortune in the attempt to do good to his fellow creatures, was compelled to abandon the enterprise. Oh, Indiana! when will she arouse from her lethargy?

Between Indianapolis and Madison, 80 miles, the country is older and more improved, and in places not so bad and in others worse affected by the drouth.

Like a great many individuals, this state of late years has been so engaged in "great works," that minor ones have been much neglected. Consequently, whoever has occasion to travel by stage here, must make up his mind to have a great deal of riding for a little money. Not but what the charges per mile are ample, yet in crossing miles of pole bridges, one gets a vast amount of perpendicular movement without any extra charge. Strange as it may seem to Yankee ears, and as discreditable as it is to Hoosier enterprise, in traveling 250 miles upon one of the most prominent stage routes in the state, I did not see the indication of a tithe of $250 worth of work having been done upon the roads this season. I therefore have a suggestion to make to agricultural societies; that they offer a premium to that road district which shall keep the roads in the most perfect repair during the year. Nothing gives more character to a country than good roads. And I am firmly impressed with the belief that with very few exceptions, good common roads are more advantage to the farming community than rail-roads. Between Vernon and Madison is one end of a rail-road between the capital of the state and the Ohio river.

It is a good piece of work, but poor stock to the state, and not half as useful to the people as a good turnpike would be. But I found it a great relief in traveling,

meeting in the Hall of Representatives on February 9, 1841, to consider the best means of promoting the agricultural interests of the state. The establishment of a state agricultural society was recommended.

after having undergone so much perpendicular motion upon the more common "rail-roads" of this country. The face of the country between Vernon and Madison is uneven and rocky, and all the streams are at right angles with the course of the track, and the general level of the country several hundred feet above the Ohio, so that the grade from the town to the top of the hill is a very expensive one, and is not yet completed.

Madison is a fine flourishing town, and what is no little to the credit of several of her merchants, I found the well read numbers of the Cultivator upon their desks, and some fine Berkshire pigs in their yards.

What a proud satisfaction it would be to me to be able to say the same of every business man in my dear adopted state. There I witnessed another creditable indication of an improving state of society, in a very large temperance meeting at which I saw "female influence" fully exerted in a most glorious cause.

But fear of becoming prolix, warns me once more to say adieu,

SOLON ROBINSON.

No. 4.

Prospect Hill, near Washinton, Ky.
Aug. 22, 1841.

EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—For ten days past, I have been in such a busy interesting scene, that my memoranda have fallen behind; but to-day I am domiciled in the house of Judge Beaty,[1] and enjoying one of the many real Kentucky welcomes that I have found in this free-hearted state, with an opportunity to bring up my notes.

[1] Adam Beatty, born at Hagerstown, Maryland, May 10, 1777; died June 9, 1858. Lawyer, farmer, and agricultural writer. Contributor to *Kentucky Farmer* and other agricultural periodicals. Published a book of essays, *Southern Agriculture* (1843); revised edition issued (1844) under title, *Essays on Practical Agriculture.* See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 2:99-100.

I wish my readers to understand that I am no flatterer of persons, and that in speaking of them, I only wish to show what a good, kind, noble feeling exists among agricultural brethren, which is forming a "band of brotherhood" that will prove a blessing to this nation.

I took the Frankfort stage at Madison early in the morning of the 14th, and after being detained waiting for the horse ferry boat till nearly sun rise, we were at length on board, when the cry of "the fog is coming," brought every eye towards a great dark mass that seemed to be rolling down between the high hills that bound the river on each side, like some mighty avalanche, threatening to overwhelm everything in its way. Crack went the whip, and the poor horses had to suffer for the drowsy tardiness of their masters; for strange as it may appear to strangers, so sudden does the fog come on here, that we had scarcely time to make the passage of the river, which the great drouth has rendered but a diminutive stream, before the fog settled down so thick that no object could be distinguished across the water, and any attempt to make the passage at such a time is not only fruitless, but sometimes dangerous. It not unfrequently happening, that the boat after a toilsome attempt, comes back to the same shore it left an hour before.

From Madison to Frankfort, 52 miles, the country is extremely hilly, and at present, parched with drouth to a distressing degree.

The town of Newcastle, which is a large country town, has but one small spring, and no wells, and the stream that usually supplies the town, as well as nearly all the cisterns, is quite dry. Much of their water has to be hauled several miles. The town is situated in a valley, and upon a limestone rock, that as yet has defied all attempts to penetrate through to water. In the settlement of a new country, slight circumstances induce the settlement of a place that afterwards grows into a town. Here, it was the fine spring, convenient and ample for the first settlers, but insufficient for the present population.

Frankfort, the capitol of this capital state, is upon the east side of the Kentucky river, 50 miles from the Ohio, surrounded by wild, high, rocky, and romantic hills, and is a very different spot from what modern taste would select for a city. Here the beginning was induced by a favorable location upon one of the hills for defence against the Indians, and upon the "great Buffalo tract" that ranged through "from Limestone to Beargrass," now the flourishing cities of Maysville and Louisville. It may be interesting to some, that I should mention, that in the first settlement of Kentucky, the whole surface was covered with a thick cane brake, and the only method of passing through the country with any ease or rapidity, was to follow the Buffalo trails, or along the beds of creeks. Now that dense vegetable mass has entirely disappeared from the face of the country, except now and then a farmer has had the good taste to preserve a little patch as a memento of olden time. Olden time! did I say? Why some of the first settlers of Kentucky, yet live upon the land they won through a long struggle with the aboriginee, who fought manfully to retain his favorite hunting ground.

When I arrived in Frankfort, I ordered the stage to set me down at the door of Thomas B. Stevenson, the energetic editor of the Kentucy Farmer. Much to my own, and more to his regret, his wife had left home that morning on a distant visit, and when I arrived, I found him also absent; but I found "the way prepared;" my name was familiar to the servants, and I went into possession of comfortable quarters with a feeling of freedom and pleasure that I always feel when I know I am welcome, and which I was sure of here, even before I saw the index of it upon the fine open manly countenance of my friend when he came in shortly after my arrival.

I spent a couple of days at Frankfort very agreeably; saw some fine stock and farms in the neighborhood, took note of the noble improvements of the Kentucky river, by which the state is making a slack water navigation

from the great coal, iron and timber region on the head waters, to the Ohio river; also visited the Penitentiary, and took particular notice of the great bagging manufactory; examined the fine specimens of beautiful marble that abound in the hills: and on the evening of Monday, the 16th, by special invitation went out on the Lexington rail-road, five miles, to the plantation of Robert W. Scott,[1] Esq. one of "nature's noblemen," dignified and improved by a location in "glorious old Kentuck."

In Mr. Scott, I found one of the best specimens of "a lawyer turned farmer," that I have ever met with. In his wife, I found those delightful charms that make a wife lovely. It is impossible for me to speak of this city bred pair, retired to and enjoying the comfort, contentment and happiness only to be found upon a farm, as I feel that the amiability of their character deserves. But their remembrance is impressed upon my heart, and forms one of those links of union, "that *can*, that MUST, that WILL" be made to exist between the friends of agricultural improvement.

Mr. Scott's farm is a perfect illustration of what may be done upon worn out land, by the improved system of husbandry. His farm is in a high state of cultivation—every acre, woodland and all, yields a good interest upon the valuation of $60 per acre. The entrance to every lot is through a well hung, self-shutting and fastening gate, and every lot numbered with conspicuous figures upon the gate post.

Not a bush, or weed or brush, or old rotton log is permitted to disfigure the beautiful lawn-like blue grass pastures, which are covered by some of the finest specimens of Durham cattle in the state.

The greatest cultivated crop is hemp. Here for the first time, I witnessed the operation of the hemp cradle; and although I had looked upon it as a doubtful improve-

[1] Robert W. Scott, of Locust Hill, six miles from Frankfort. Noted livestock breeder. See Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 2:241-42 (August, 1841).

ment, I am bound to say, after conversing with the proprietor, and more particularly with the field hands, that it is a decided improvement, and a highly useful agricultural implement.

After spending one of the most agreeable days of my life, I took the evening train of cars, and arrived in Lexington, Tuesday evening about dusk. The distance from Frankfort to Lexington, 28 miles, over a very rough railroad; the cars propelled by horses.

I had no sooner registered my name at the hotel, than I found sundry old acquaintances, not of me personally, but by name.

Around Lexington, the garden of Kentucky, I visited so many fine plantations, and met with such a universal hospitable reception, that I should become prolix and tiresome to you and your readers, were I to go into particulars. I however spent a night with William P. Curd, the great Berkshire hog breeder of Kentucky. His fine farm is 2½ miles south of the city, and is a part of the original plantation originally settled by his grandfather. He has about thirty full grown Berkshires and several fine Irish graziers. Five of his Berkshires are imported. Old Ben Shaker, a monstrous hog, is yet active and vigorous. Mr. Lossing's old Maxima and her companions had just arrived and looked full as well as could be expected after so long a journey in such hot weather. Mr. C. has one Berkshire barrow that will weigh near a thousand pounds. He finds ready sales for pigs at $30 a pair. On Thursday, Mr. Curd took his buggy and drove me up to Dr. Martin's,[1] where I experienced the mortification of finding him absent from home. We were however, very politely received by his son, and after spending a few hours among the doctor's numerous hogs and cattle, we took the road in the cool of a very hot day towards Lexington. By previous arrangement, I stopped at the de-

[1] Dr. Samuel D. Martin, Colbyville. Breeder of livestock, particularly hogs. Frequent contributor to *Western Farmer and Gardener.* See 2:255-57 (August, 1841).

lightful mansion of Richard Pindle,[1] Esq. whose plantation adjoins that of the Hon. Henry Clay.

Mr. Pindle is another fine specimen of a lawyer farmer, he still following his profession. In the morning, after examining his own and the adjoining plantations, and the beautiful show of fine stock, Mr. Pindle took me in his carriage, and spent the whole day upon those unrivaled plantations, that abound in that most beautiful and unrivaled country around Lexington.

I have taken copious notes of many things that gave me great pleasure that day, but I have already spun this letter out to such a length, that I must beg permission, if what I have written should prove interesting, to refer to those notes at some future time.

There is one fact that I must not omit to mention, that speaks volumes in favor of the prosperity of this city and the high state of improvement of the country; and that is, that nearly every one of the roads diverging from Lexington, is a complete Macadamized turnpike.

Upon one of these, the Maysville road, I started yesterday at 4 o'clock in the morning, and after passing over some 60 miles of a very fine country, (excepting the celebrated "Blue lick knobs,") I was set down at 1 o'clock, P.M. at the mouth of Judge Beaty's lane, and calling one of his black boys from a neighboring hemp field, to take charge of my baggage, I walked up to the house, which according to Kentucky fashion, is situated in the middle of a 450 acre tract, about a half mile back from, and out of sight of the road. I found a venerable, good looking, intelligent old man, enjoying his book after dinner, under the shade of a noble old elm in the yard, and at once approached and announced my name, and in five minutes I was as much at home as though under my own roof—and here let me and my readers take a short rest from the labors and remarks of their old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

[1] Richard Pindell, conductor of the *Franklin Farmer* in 1840.

Traveling Memoranda—No. 5.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:179-80; Nov., 1841]

Cincinnati, O., August 27, 1841.

Editors of Cultivator—My last was written from "Prospect Hill, the name of Judge Beaty's farm—a name that, to eastern people, who build their houses upon a bare hill, so as to be seen of the world, would appear very inappropriate, for the prospect does not extend beyond his own farm. And here let me remark that a traveler upon the great thoroughfares of this state, never sees the best part of Kentucky. The best houses are located back from the road, and the way of approach to them is generally through one of the woodland pastures that add such great beauty to Kentucky scenery; and it is no uncommon thing that the only approach to a large plantation lies through one or two other plantations. The inhabitants preferring private to public roads, and not seeming to view it as any serious inconvenience that they have to pass a dozen gates between the mansion and the public road. But their gates are such as that too numerous class who bave been "putting up the bars" all their lives, without getting the gap stopped, might examine and pattern after with profit.

Judge Beaty's name has lately become well known as a writer of several essays upon Kentucky agriculture, and a letter upon the profits of the hemp culture upon his own farm. The Judge also keeps 4 or 500 fine wool sheep, and which appeared in very good condition, and what appeared very singular to me, he takes no trouble whatever to prevent breeding in-and-in, and stoutly maintains that the importance of constantly crossing is entirely overrated. Although I could not defend my theory by example, of the deleterious effects of breeding in and in, yet I could not become a convert to the Judge's theory.

One thing I learned from the long experience of the Judge and many others, that the hemp crop, although such a heavy one, does not exhaust the soil. He also

thinks that water rotting may be profitably adopted in many places.

Having spent just such a time as agricultural brethren should always spend together, my friend ordered his carriage to the door early on Monday morning, and took me into Maysville, six miles, in time to take the morning boat for Cincinnati, which is about 60 miles below. Although this is "the river of beauty," it is now so sunk below the level of the rich bottom lands upon its banks, that we were more interested in viewing our remarkable proximity to the bottom of the stream, than looking at the farms along the shore, except those which are elevated upon the sides of the ranges of high hills that every where hem in the valley of almost all the great western streams. It may be interesting to some, that I should say that the Ohio varies 60 feet, from low to high water. The bottom lands are very broad and level, and in the great flood of 1832, were covered in many places from hill to hill, producing such devastation and distress as only can be known to the "dwellers upon the mighty waters." This great and flourishing city of the west, is built upon the "first and second bottom," the upper level being some 60 feet higher than the first, which was found by the flood of 1832 to be several feet too low, for the whole of its broad surface was completely submerged, so that large steamers traversed the most populous and business streets. Having formerly been a resident here, when I first came to the west, I was enabled after an absence of a dozen years, to realize the magic like change that is so rapidly going on throughout the Great West. I wish I could truly say that it was in all cases a change that brought a great increase of human happiness in its train. But until men cease to look for wealth and happiness in connection only, and for honor and respectability only in towns and cities, we must expect to see crime and degradation as the accompaniments of what we are prone to call "great improvements."

But amid all the change that I see here, I find one

"that can, that will, that must," produce an increase of happiness—the blessed and blessing giving spirit of temperance has hovered over this spot. The fruits of the visit of this lovely goddess are visible here, as they are every where that the inhabitants of city, town, country, or farm, encourage her to alight as she flies over our country. As another evidence of improvement, allow me to say in connection with this subject, that although only a few years have elapsed since fashion *dictated* that every gentleman in this region should keep his sideboard loaded with liquor, yet during my visit to Kentucky and this vicinity, I have not, in one single instance, seen such a thing, and in only one instance have I been solicited to take a glass of wine, which, as the host did not partake of himself, went the round of our circle and from the room untouched.

But enough of moralizing—now to business. Early in the morning after my arrival in Cincinnati, I made near my distant acquaintance with my friends Affleck and Foster,[1] the editor and publisher of a very neat monthly journal in pamphlet form, devoted to the pleasing task of elevating the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil, and directly afterwards, I received an invitation which I accepted from Mr. Wm. Neff,[2] to take a seat in his carriage, and in company with Mr. Affleck, visit his farm about seven miles out, on the turnpike leading towards Indiana. Mr. Neff is a gentleman of fortune, retired from the business of a merchant, and has taken this very pleasant method of amusing himself by doing good to the cause of agricultural improvement in every branch of it that he undertakes.

Here I found a very extensive and beautiful stock of

[1] Charles Foster, editor and illustrator, Cincinnati *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 1841-1842.

[2] William Neff, near Cincinnati. Packer. Vigorous supporter of Robinson in the formation of a national agricultural society. Breeder of shorthorns. See *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 2:234-35 (July, 1841).

Short Horns, which the great drouth that prevails hereabouts has brought into the stable for feed, as Mr. Neff has determined for the purpose of getting them more generally introduced into common use through the country, to offer the whole lot at auction a few days hence, on a long credit, and is, therefore, obliged to feed them, to keep them in a fit condition for sale. He also has a very fine lot of hogs, of the Berkshire and Irish Grazier breeds. Mr. Neff is an extensive pork packer, and although he prefers the Berkshire for his own use, yet thinks that among a people that make pork, as Pindar did his razors, to sell, without regard to quality, that a larger breed would be more profitable.

Mr. Neff is also a successful cultivator of the grape, though by no means to so great an extent as Mr. Longworth[1] of this city, who is probably one of the largest vintners in the Union.

I saw on Mr. Neff's farm a specimen of hedge, of the Osage Orange, that for beauty, and probably will also be for usefulness, before any other specimen of hedge that I have ever seen in this country. As soon as this is sufficiently grown and proved, Mr. Neff will give some account of it that will be useful to others. After spending a delightful day, we rode into town fully impressed with the truth of the saying, that

"God made the country, and man made the town;"

or in other words, that the beauty, comforts, and enjoyments of a country life are far superior to those of the town.

The 25th I spent in that very busy occupation of seeing every thing, but more particularly in examining the great extension of the city, and great increase of manufacturing establishments, all of which indicate an improved state of agriculture, for we must constantly bear

[1] Nicholas Longworth, born January 16, 1782, in Newark, New Jersey; died February 10, 1863. Lawyer, real-estate operator, and patron of the arts; chiefly distinguished as a horticulturist for the introduction of new varieties of grapes and strawberries. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11:393-94.

in mind that that is the foundation stone of all commercial and manufacturing prosperity.

If your limits would permit, I would give you a long chapter upon the subject of the pork business alone.

Hog killing, and pork packing, and bacon smoking, is carried on here to an extent almost surpassing belief. I am sorry to say that all those engaged in it the last year are likely to suffer great loss by the depression of prices. And the farmer is destined to suffer this year, as the depression will now affect the article in his hands. A gentleman well acquainted and well informed in the business, thinks that pork will not nett the farmer this fall more than 1 1-2 or 2 cents a pound. I also visited the markets here, as I look upon them as affording a pretty fair index of the surrounding country. I need not have been told that the country had suffered for want of rain—the vegetable productions, particularly potatoes, showed that. Peaches, which I have often seen sold in this market for 12 cents a bushel, are now few and far between at one-fourth that sum a piece and as poor as they are dear at that. Total destruction of the germ of this fruit took place last winter, throughout the west.

Apples are also very poor this season. Speaking of fruits and vegetables, reminds me of a new enemy of man which has made its appearance this summer in some parts of Kentucky in great quantities. It is a black, or in some, black with lead colored stripes, bug or fly, about half or three-quarters of an inch long and said by those acquainted to belong to the cantharides family, which is very destructive upon potato tops and many other green and tender plants.

Last evening I was called upon by a well known friend of agriculture, Mr. John J. Mahard,[1] with a most cordial

[1] John J. Mahard, Jr. Contributor to the *Western Farmer and Gardener* and the *Prairie Farmer*. Chairman, Farmers' and Mechanics' Agricultural Society, Hamilton County, Ohio. For a description of his farm see *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 2:233-34 (July, 1841). He later moved to Illinois, living near Springfield. *Prairie Farmer*, 4:254 (November, 1844).

invitation to ride with him to his farm about seven miles N.E. from the city, where I found probably the largest and best stock of Berkshire hogs in Ohio. Mr. M. personally superintends his farm and breeding stock, and also his pork packing and shipping house in the city. I was highly pleased with him and his family, and his stock and farm, and would gladly have spent another day under his hospitable roof, but having already engaged my passage in the fast mail for Baltimore this day at 11 o'clock, I was compelled, as I have often been of late, to forego the pleasure of a more lengthy visit where I was made to feel that I was welcome—welcome too, not as a friend or personal acquaintance, but one who has, I am bound to believe, become favorably known by name, to many of the readers of the Cultivator, as a friend to agriculture.

The river is too low to admit of steamers ascending to Wheeling, and, therefore, in a few hours I shall be on my way through the great and fertile state of Ohio, right sorry that time will not allow me to take notes by the way. Anxiety to reach Washington during the present session of Congress, will also prevent me from adopting a slower mode of locomotion, and passing through Pennsylvania, and accepting the public invitation which I have just seen in the August number of the Cultivator, to visit Mr. Wm. P. Kinzer,[1] and whom I now thus publicly and cordially thank and assure that if it ever comes in my way to become personally acquainted with him, I shall not neglect it. And although it is not in my way of business to "deliver lectures on agriculture," or to "prepare myself," except upon the spur of the moment, for anything, yet I hope when we do meet, that my Pennsylvania friend will find that my conversational powers are not entirely lacking.

[1] William Penn Kinzer, Spring Lawn Farm, Pequea, Pennsylvania. Farmer, agriculturist. He included his invitation to Robinson in a letter advocating a national agricultural organization. *Cultivator*, 8:136.

And now, Messrs. Editors, I have only time to say, that I shall continue to furnish my "memoranda," as I progress along my tour, which you must administer to your readers in "broken doses," taking great care not to produce a surfeit. And I wish you to give early notice to all who are determined to follow my notes through my journey, that they may make early preparation to renew their subscription to your paper, as I am fully persuaded that I shall find so much matter to interest me, that I shall be wholly unable to crowd it into a compass that will allow you to get it into the present volume, without crowding out some more useful and valuable matter.

I remain your's and your readers' old acquaintance and friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

LETTER TO JOHN B. NILES

[John B. Niles Papers, Indiana State Library]

[August, 1841]

TO JOHN B. NILES[1] ESQ. ATTORNEY GEN[L]. TO "HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ALL THE SQUATTERS"—

MOST WORTHY AND MUCH RESPECTED SUBJECT—

The fact is well known to you that the palace never has "the string of the latch pulled in," but unfortunately in this "squatting country," those who "first squat upon claims" hold a "pre-emption right" to them as long as the soil remains—

You are also aware that those two "old settlers," Nisiprius & the Forks, "have squatted" upon the only spare room and two spare beds in the pallace, and unless you

[1] John B. Niles, born West Fairlee, Orange County, Vermont; died July 6, 1879. Lawyer, jurist. Professor of chemistry, Indiana Medical College, La Porte, 1840. Attorney for Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad, 1851-1879. See *Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men of the State of Indiana . . .* 2:dist. 13:46 (Western Biographical Publishing Company, Cincinnati, 1880).

can "jump one of their claims" or "buy a right," your chance for "making a settlement" is but "a poor claim"—

To gain 'quarters' then, you must enter into a treaty of amity with John H. that him and John B. may *lie* together, we all know they will do that seperately—

I am most respectfully and graciously pleased to subscribe myself your soverign—

SOLON—

LETTER FROM SOLON ROBINSON, ESQ.

[Ellsworth, Henry L., *Appendix II*, pp. 21-27, Washington, 1841[1]]

WASHINGTON CITY, *September* 3, 1841.

HON. HENRY L. ELLSWORTH:

Dear Sir: I have the honor and pleasure to acknowledge your communication of the 1st inst., and as I learn from the conversation which we had yesterday upon the subject, that your object is not solely for your own gratification, but for the purpose of conveying useful information to our fellow citizens, and particularly to those who are desirous of emigrating, or of investing funds in the great and growing West, I will endeavor to answer your inquiries with all the candor that the public have given me credit for, at the same time I will be as brief as the nature of the case will admit.

As your inquiries relate principally to prairie lands, let me premise that I am and have been for a number of years a resident upon the western prairies, and have made many careful observations; and to do away with any impression that might arise in the minds of those not familiarly acquainted with me, that according to the fashion of these humbugging days, I am puffing my own wares, I wish to premise further, that I have not an acre of land for sale.

First, then, you inquire about fencing.

[1] Extracts from this letter, dealing with fencing, were reprinted in the *Cultivator*, 9:42 (March, 1842).

Many attempts have been made to fence with earth, and nearly all fail—Cause; the sods are piled up like laying stone wall, and in two or three years, the whole fence is a pile of the softest fine manure. Others have tried to pile up earth and sod it over with the native sods. But these rarely succeed; the grass dies, and the bank being too steep, slips down in spring, and there being no rails on top the cattle soon form a path over. But if some cheap plan of making a bank two or three feet high, from the bottom of a ditch on each side, with a gradual slope, which would soon grass over with blue grass sowed upon it, can be adopted, in which bank-posts with two or three rails just like the old fashioned yankee post and rail wall fence—it will be complete.

Your second and third questions relate to prairie grass and hay.

The quality of prairie grass is as various as of domestic grasses. Of the section of country where I live, (which is near the South end of Lake Michigan,) I will say that no grass in the world is better adapted for summer keeping of cattle and sheep. Grass in immense abundance, can be selected for winter feed, which if well put up, is as good as timothy or red top. In fact, there is a kind of grass which I deem the original red top, growing wild, and affording two or three tons per acre.

In answer to your fourth question, I must say, that the soil upon the prairies of the West is as diversified as in any other section of the country; but that generally speaking it is adapted to the culture of *all* the true grasses. Whether timothy and blue grass will grow upon the unploughed ground, may be best answered by assuring you, that whenever you find an old Indian village or much used encampment, you will find the ground covered with blue grass, growing most luxuriantly, and in some places white clover; and wherever timothy seed is scattered along roads, or in pastures, it grows readily.

Part of the fifth question is already answered. The blue grass will flourish by cultivation, and afford excel-

lent pasturage long after the winter sets in, even in the latitude where I live, which is about 41½°.

I can hardly answer your sixth question. It is difficult to tell *which* kind of stock is the most profitable where all kinds are, and might be upon a large scale much more so. I will state facts and you may draw conclusions. Cattle can be wintered for $2 a head, and sheep for less than one fourth of that, even now, when we lack the advantage of fall pastures. The wild grass springs remarkably early in the spring, but it fails early in the fall.

Seventh: The best mode of feeding crops of any kind, upon a large or small scale, is to gather them and feed them to stock in a suitable situation.

Eighth: I have no experience upon the subject, but I have no doubt that a section of land upon the prairie, not more than three or four miles from timber, can be well enclosed in the manner I have spoken of, at less than 50 cents per acre. The saving in the quantity of rails will be about two-thirds.

Rails cost, delivered upon the ground, about $2 per hundred.

Ninth: The one year old cattle can be purchased at about $3 per head, and the cost of keeping is above stated at $2 per head, a year. If sold in the same country as where purchased, the price would be correspondingly low, of course. The price of cattle now, where I live, is for cows from $10 to $18; four year old steers, $30 to $45; working oxen $40 to $60; sheep $1 50 to $2; but they can be purchased and driven there from Ohio, in large lots, for about half that sum. Being remarkably healthy on the prairie, and costing so little for keeping, of course they are profitable.

Tenth: I cannot say *what* would be the value of land thus fenced for several years, but I know that pasturing prairie land improves the value of it amazingly for all other kind of cultivation.

Eleventh: Is answered in the ninth.

Twelfth: There is no diffuculty in procuring water for stock. It is found existing naturally in great abundance, in streams, springs, ponds and lakes; and when those are not sufficient, it can always be procured by easy digging wells, or artificial ponds can be made very cheap in clay soils, in the same manner that vast quantities of cattle are watered in Kentucky.

Thirteenth: A good comfortable cabin, such as thousands live in at the West, will cost from $50 to $100, complete.

Fourteenth: One man can tend 30 acres of corn well, and "sorter tend" 60 or 70, the product varying from 30 to 80 bushels to an acre.

Fifteenth: Generally speaking, the quality of the soil in the Wabash valley is fully equal in every point of view, in its native state, to that of either the Ohio, Miami, Sioto, or Muskingum. It only needs the same cultivation to develop its riches.

Sixteenth: The present advantages of market in those valleys over the Wabash are very considerable, but it requires but a glance upon the map, to show you that just as soon as the Wabash and Erie canal is finished, say in 1842 or 3, that the whole of the upper Wabash valley will be nearer to New-York market than either of the others.

Seventeenth: I cannot see why the Wabash valley will not support as dense a population as either of the others. Nearly the whole surface is susceptible of cultivation, and a healthy climate, with the exception of that one complaint, the ague, that pervades almost every new settled country in the world.

Eighteenth: I cannot see why the land should not eventually become as valuable in the Wabash valley, as in any other part of the great and fertile West.

Nineteenth: The price varies from $5 to $10 per acre, owing to locality. There is no tract of land in Indiana, that would not pay a good interest upon cultivation at more than $10 per acre.

Thus I have gone through with your inquiries, and instead of considering it burthensome, I have done it with great pleasure; and did not the business I have on hand crowd upon me, I should feel disposed to go on at considerable length with remarks upon the western country.

Permit me, however, to say, that it is an open door, through which every industrious man may walk into the temple of wealth, honor and fame. There is yet a vast quantity of the richest kind of soil to be had of Government at $1,25 an acre, in the State of Indiana, and without prejudice on account of my own residence there, I cannot but believe it is the best western State or Territory for the eastern emigrant to settle in. Our laws are uniform and good; our climate mild and healthy, and even without our system of internal improvements, which is only suspended for a short period, we have great facilities of navigation to send off our surplus produce. But above all, you may see that upon the great prairies that abound in the northwestern quarter of the State, cattle can be raised to maturity at a very low rate, and they could then be driven to the eastward to market on foot, for an expense, say from $2 to $5 per head.

In answer to the question which your friend asked me yesterday, "what would I advise a person owning a large tract of land in Indiana to do with it?" I will answer, I would advise him to procure some honest, industrious poor man with a family, build him a house, and fence his land, if prairie, or if timbered land, "make a deadening," and stock it with cattle, and as fast as they tramped the soil, sow it with cultivated grasses. The growth of his stock would soon pay for the improvement on the land, and that improvement would double its value, and make it more saleable, because it would be in a state ready for the work of the emigrant upon his coming into the country.

There is another way that land owners might do, and which would be beneficial to themselves and their fellow creatures. Let them unite together, and put one half

their land in a kind of common stock, at low prices, and take steps to encourage emigrants to go on and settle these lands, and if required, give the poor emigrant a credit, and let it be understood that he could have his choice of all the lands in the stock by settling on them at a price fixed. His improvements on the land bought would certainly enchance the price of the unoccupied lots, and would be the means of selling the whole. Unless land owners will adopt some course to get settlers upon their lands they may lay idle for many years, and prove an unprofitable stock. The land owners certainly have it in their power to enhance the value of their land, and at the same time confer a lasting benefit upon their fellow creatures, if they will adopt measures to have the land settled upon. While it remains in its natural state it cannot rise in value; it is settlement upon and around, with all the et cetera of roads, mills, towns and schools, that makes land in a new country rise in value.

To the emigrant desirous of settling upon and improving Government land, especially under the inviting provision of the new land bill, you may see that there is yet an immense quantity of such land yet to be found in Indiana, and some of it cannot be exceeded in beauty or fertility in the world.

Having made this letter already much longer than I intended, I will close with this assurance, that any information my residence and long acquaintance in the West will enable me to give, or any service that I can render to promote the settlement and improvement of the country, or the happiness of my fellow creatures, will be rendered as freely as this answer has been made to your several inquiries.

I only regret that the great haste in which I have done it, has prevented me from making it more interesting to you and your friends.

I have the honor to be,

Most respectfully, your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Formation of National Society of Agriculture

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 1:71-72; Sep., 1841[1]]

[September 6, 1841]

Address to the Friends of this Measure throughout the United States.

Having arrived in Washington city, upon my proposed tour of observation, and having found by personal interview and extensive correspondence, an almost unbounded desire among the Agriculturists of the country that a National Society should be formed at an early day, it was concluded to call a few of the leading friends of the cause together for consultation.

Agreeably to notice given on the morning of the 4th inst. a very respectable meeting of *real friends*, was held in this afternoon in the great entrance hall of the Patent Office: every facility for that purpose having been most cheerfully afforded by the Hon. Henry L. Ellsworth, Commissioner of Patents, of whom the country can truly boast a most decided friend of agricultural improvement.

The following are minutes of the proceedings:

"The meeting was called to order by the Hon. Mr. Ellsworth, who stated to the assemblage that Solon Robinson, Esq., of Indiana, was then present—and that as Mr. Robinson was looked upon as the original projector of the measure upon which those present had met to consult, he moved that the meeting be organized by calling Mr. Robinson to the chair. The motion being seconded by Mr. Callan,[2] was put by Mr. Ellsworth, and carried by acclamation. Whereupon Mr. Robinson took the chair, and after offering his thanks to the meeting for the honor conferred upon a stranger in the city of Washington, at the solicitation of several gentlemen present, Mr.

[1] Printed also in *Tippecanoe Journal and Lafayette Free Press*, Lafayette, October 13, 1841, and in part in Albany *Cultivator*, 8:153 (October, 1841). See also *Western Farmer and Gardener*, 3:4 (October, 1841).

[2] John F. Callan, druggist and seedsman, Washington, D. C.

Robinson, before taking his seat, briefly stated the object of the present meeting to be a mere primary one, for the purpose of consulting together upon the expediency of calling a general meeting of ALL favorable to the object of organizing a National Society of Agriculture, and should those now here present deem it expedient, to fix upon a time, and adopt some preparatory steps towards forming a constitution. Where-upon J. F. Callan and John A. Smith,[1] Esqrs. were appointed Secretaries of this meeting.

The following resolution was submitted by Mr. Ellsworth, and after several gentlemen had expressed their views very freely, it was unanimously

Resolved, That the interest of Agriculture imperiously require the co-operation of its friends throughout the Union, to *concentrate* their efforts by the formation of a National Society, for the promotion of National Industry, and *"to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of American soil."*

On motion af the Hon. A. O. Dayton,[2] it was

Resolved, That [blank] be a committee to prepare a draft of a Constitution for a National Society of Agriculture, to be submitted to a meeting of the friends of such a society, from all parts of the Union, to be held at the city of Washington on the second Wednesday of the ensuing session of Congress.

On the motion of the Hon. T. S. Smith,[3] it was *Resolved,* That the chairman fill the blank in the last reso-

[1] John A. Smith, of Washington, D. C. Possibly the John A. Smith who in 1819 sold an acre of ground containing several springs to furnish fire protection for the capitol and drinking water for members of Congress. Bryan, W. B., *A History of the National Capital . . .*, 2:239 (New York, 1914). Letter from the Public Library, Washington, D. C.

[2] Aaron Ogden Dayton, of Washington, D. C. Died at Philadelphia, 1858. Assigned to the Diplomatic Bureau of the State Department, and for many years preceding his death fourth auditor of the Treasury Department.

[3] Possibly Truman Smith, representative from Connecticut.

lution with the name of one gentleman from the District of Columbia, and one from each State and Territory.

On the motion of Mr. Ellsworth, *Resolved*, That the name of the chairman of this meeting be added to the committee for framing the constitution.

The chairman announced the names of the following gentlemen as the committee:

Hon. Henry L. Ellsworth, District of Columbia; Hon. James M. Garnett, Virginia; Hon. Chilton Allen,[1] Kentucky; Hon. Oliver H. Smith,[2] Indiana; Hon. Thomas S. Hind,[3] Illinois; Hon. Lewis F. Linn,[4] Missouri; Hon. Francis H. Gordon,[5] Tennessee; M. W. Phillips, Esq.,

[1] Chilton Allan, born Albemarle County, Virginia, April 6, 1786; died September 3, 1858. Lawyer, legislator, president of the State Board of Internal Improvements, Kentucky. Representative in Congress, 1831-1837. See *Collins' Historical Sketches of Kentucky*, 2:131.

[2] Oliver H. Smith, born October 23, 1794, near Trenton, New Jersey; died March 19, 1859. Author, attorney, representative, and senator from Indiana. See *Biographical and Genealogical History of Wayne, Fayette, Union and Franklin Counties, Indiana*, 1:245-46 (Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, 1899); Woollen, William Wesley, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana*, 196-203 (Indianapolis, 1883).

[3] Reverend Thomas S. Hinde, Mount Carmel, Illinois. Contributor to the *Cultivator* and the *Western Farmer and Gardener*. Pioneer advocate of agricultural education combined with collegiate study. Advocate of a government department for agricultural and manufacturing interests. See *Cultivator*, 7:153 and 8:14.

[4] Lewis Fields Linn, born November 5, 1795, near Louisville, Kentucky; died October 3, 1843. Senator from Missouri. Physician. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11:282-83.

[5] Francis H. Gordon, Clinton College, Tennessee. Corresponding secretary of the Tennessee State Agricultural Society, 1841-42. Contributor to the Nashville *Agriculturist* and the Albany *Cultivator*. Especially interested in the culture of silk and in agricultural education. A vice-president of the National Society of Agriculture. See *Cultivator*, 8:52 (March, 1841); Nashville *Agriculturist*, 2:61-62, 238, 252, 255-56 (March, October, November, 1841), 3:209 (August, 1842).

Mississippi; Hon. Dixon H. Lewis,[1] Alabama; Hon. Alex Mouton,[2] Louisiana; Hon. Wm. S. Fulton,[3] Arkansas; Hon. Augustus C. Dodge,[4] Iowa; Gov. James D. Doty,[5] Wisconsin; Hon. William Woodbridge,[6] Michigan; Wm. Neff, Esq, Ohio; Wm. P. Kinza, Esq., Pennsylvania; Edmund D. Morris, Esq.,[7] New Jersey; Dr. James W. Thompson, Delaware; Hon. John S. Skinner,[8] Maryland;

[1] Dixon Hall Lewis, born August 10, 1802, probably in Dinwiddie County, Virginia; died October 25, 1848. Lawyer. Representative and senator from Alabama. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11:209-10.

[2] Alexander Mouton, born November 19, 1804; died February 12, 1885. Governor of Louisiana and United States senator. Lawyer. Interested in railroads and agriculture. *Op. cit.*, 13:295.

[3] William S. Fulton, born June 2, 1795, in Cecil County, Maryland; died August 15, 1844. Lawyer, governor of Arkansas Territory, and senator from Arkansas, 1836-1844. Fought public land manipulation. See sketch in Shinn, Josiah H., *Pioneers and Makers of Arkansas* (Genealogical and Historical Publishing Company, Little Rock, 1908).

[4] Augustus Caesar Dodge, born January 2, 1812, in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri; died November 20, 1883. Senator from Iowa. Minister to Spain. Interested in western lands. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 5:344.

[5] James Duane Doty, born November 5, 1799, in Salem, Washington County, New York; died June 13, 1865. Politician and speculator in western lands in Michigan and Wisconsin. Member of Congress from Wisconsin. Superintendent of Indian Affairs and governor of Utah Territory. *Op. cit.*, 5:390-91.

[6] William Woodbridge, born August 20, 1780, at Norwich, Connecticut; died October 20, 1861, at Detroit, Michigan. Lawyer, governor of Michigan, 1840-1841, and senator from Michigan, 1841-1847. See *American Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men . . . Michigan Volume*, dist. 1:156-58 (Western Biographical Publishing Company, Cincinnati, 1878).

[7] Edmund Morris, born August 28, 1804, Burlington, New Jersey; died May 4, 1874. Newspaper editor. Wrote *Ten Acres Enough for Intensive Gardening* (1844). Experimented with silk culture. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 13:204-5.

[8] John Stuart Skinner, born February 22, 1788, in Maryland; died at Baltimore, March 21, 1851. Established the *American Farmer*, 1819, the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, 1829, the *Farmers' Library and Monthly Journal of Agriculture*,

Hon. Edmund Deberry,[1] North Carolina; Hon. Francis W. Pickens,[2] South Carolina; Hon. Wm. C. Dawson,[3] Georgia; Gov. Call,[4] Florida; Caleb N. Bement, Esq., New York; Solomon W. Jewett, Esq.,[5] Vermont; Hon. Levi Woodbury,[6] New Hampshire; Hon. George Evans,[7] Maine; B. V. French, Esq.,[8] Massachusetts; William C.

1845, *The Plough, the Loom, and the Anvil,* 1848. Edited numerous agricultural books. Interested in improvement of livestock, particularly thoroughbred horses. See sketch by Myrtle Helfrich in the Baltimore *Sunday Sun,* February 17, 1935, pp. 10-11; also *Dictionary of American Biography,* 17:199-201.

[1] Edmund Deberry, born August 4, 1787, Montgomery County, North Carolina; died December 12, 1859. Member of Congress from Lawrenceville and Mount Gilead, North Carolina. *Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of United States,* edited by John Howard Brown, 2:401 (James H. Lamb Company, Boston, 1900).

[2] Francis Wilkinson Pickens, born April 7, 1805, in St. Paul's Parish, Colleton District, South Carolina; died January 25, 1869. Lawyer. Minister to Russia, 1858-1860. Confederate governor of South Carolina. Southern planter. See *Dictionary of American Biography,* 14:559-61.

[3] William Crosby Dawson, born January 4, 1798, in Greene County, Georgia; died May 5, 1856. Lawyer. Representative and senator from Georgia. *Ibid.,* 5:154-55.

[4] Richard Keith Call, born 1791, in Prince George County, Virginia; died September 14, 1862. Soldier, lawyer, statesman. Appointed governor of Florida Territory, March, 1841.

[5] Solomon W. Jewett, Middlebury, Vermont. Authority on livestock, particularly sheep. Active in New York State Agricultural Society. Contributor to Albany *Cultivator, Prairie Farmer, New England Farmer,* and *American Agriculturist.*

[6] Levi Woodbury, born Francestown, New Hampshire, December 22, 1789; died Portsmouth, September 4, 1851. Jurist and statesman.

[7] George Evans, born in Hallowell, Maine, January 12, 1797; died in Portland, Maine, April 6, 1867. Lawyer; representative in Congress, 1829-1841, senator, 1841-1847.

[8] Benjamin V. French, Braintree, Massachusetts. Vice-president, Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Active in Norfolk County Agricultural Society. Contributor to *Transactions* of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, *New England Farmer, American Agriculturist,* and other periodicals.

Chapin, Esq.,[1] Rhode Island; Hon. Thomas B. Osborn,[2] Connecticut.

On motion the meeting adjourned.

SOLON ROBINSON, *Chairman.*

J. F. CALLON,
JOHN A. SMITH, } *Secretaries.*

Washington City, Sept. 4th, 1841.

By this, my friends, you will see that the ball is now fairly in motion. I hope I have been fortunate enough in making a selection upon the spur of the moment, of the gentlemen named as a committee, to secure the services of such as will act promptly for the good of this great cause. I hope that they will interchange views with one another, and at the day appointed for the meeting to organize the Society, I hope they will come together, and have the satisfaction of meeting the largest body of the real friends of agricultural improvement ever collected together.

I most earnestly hope that every individual friend of a National Agricultural Society, whom bounteous nature has provided with the means, will attend the first meeting. I hope every Agricultural Society in the Union will send special delegates to the National Society.

I have and shall recommend that the price of membership be fixed very low, as the great and grand object is to enlist a great number in this bond of brotherhood, and by concentrated effort of mind more than with money, to produce a happy effect upon society.

[1] William C. Chapin, Providence; Rhode Island, son of Deacon Josiah Chapin, banker, and cotton and cotton goods merchant of Providence, who also engaged in extensive farming near Pawtucket. Became a partner in his father's firm in 1839 and carried on his business after the latter's retirement in 1844. See sketch of Josiah Chapin in *The Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men of Rhode Island,* pt. 1:222 (National Biographical Publishing Company, Providence, 1881).

[2] Thomas Burr Osborne, born in Weston (now Easton), Connecticut, July 8, 1798; died September 2, 1869. Lawyer. Representative from Connecticut, 1839-1843.

A large meeting at the organization is highly important, to give tone and effect to the measure, and to encourage one another. It is probable also that steps will then be taken to found an institution where a course of scientific and agricultural lectures will be delivered every winter, free to every farmer's son or daughter in the United States.

Many of my friends have expressed a wish that the first meeting might be held in the present autumn. But it is thought by those with whom I have advised here, that the time of a session of Congress would be the most interesting. In fact, every freeman of this country ought to have the opportunity at least once in his life, of visiting the Capitol of his country, at such a time. There is then enough to be seen and learned, sufficient to repay all the trouble and expense of such a visit.

The Patent Office alone is the greatest and best museum of useful curiosities in the Union.

The Hall of Manufactures, 273 feet long, will be filled with ten thousand curious and wonderful things. It is already worthy of great interest, and before next winter will be much more so.

No doubt manufacturers and mechanics will take advantage of the time of the meeting of the Friends of a National Society of Agriculture, to make exhibitions that will be sufficient to induce great attention, and from which a mass of useful information will be gathered.

I cannot but look upon the first meeting of the friends of a National Agricultural Society as an epoch in the history of my country that will long be remembered.

I hope all of my correspondents to whom I have promised information upon this subject, will take this address as particularly addressed to them. And I hope that every paper in the United States that is friendly to that interest which is the base of all others, will make known to its readers what is now doing for the promotion and organization of this Society. I am confident that every agricultural paper will afford the information to its readers,

and I hope in particular, that every editor of such papers will attend the first meeting.

From Washington, I shall continue my tour through the Eastern States, and I hope to have a personal interview with many of my agricultural friends.

But above all things, let all remember, *"now is the time"* for them to say that "something *can*, something *must*, something *shall* be done," to advance the interest of agriculture in the United States.

Be assured that I remain your earnest agricultural friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Washington City, Sept. 6th, 1841.

TRAVELING MEMORANDA—NO. 6.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 8:196-97; Dec., 1841[1]]

Baltimore, Sep. 9, 1841.

EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—Once more I am ready to make another memoranda for the perusal of the readers of the Cultivator. How I could dilate upon the subject of the great change that 40 years have wrought upon the face of Ohio. How the dense forest has given way before the hand of persevering industry, and laid open immense fields of the richest of soil to cultivation, and increase of wealth and happiness. But notwithstanding the splendid mansion now occupies the site of the lowly log cabin, I cannot believe that there is more real enjoyment within, than the owner used to feel while gathered around the broad blazing fire of the settler's new home. It is the contented and cheerful mind that finds enjoyment in whatever situation his lot may chance to be cast.

What a wild uncultivated waste was this fine region 40 years ago. Even 15 years since, how we used to toil along the muddy roads of Ohio, the stage often to the axles in the soft, wet soil, and the passengers not unfrequently called upon to lend the strength of Hercules to lift the vehicle into an upright position. Now the road

[1] Reprinted in part in *American Farmer*, Baltimore, 2d series, 3:252 (December 29, 1841).

from Cincinnati to Columbus is nearly all Macadamized, and from thence, or rather from Springfield to Wheeling, we roll in ease and comfort, at great speed, along the great National road that was designed to connect the east with the *far* west. As an evidence that the roads are not quite impassable, I have only to state that I took the "fast mail" at 11 o'clock on Friday at Cincinnati, and on Monday night I slept at the "relay house," nine miles from Baltimore, traveling by stage all the way, except the short distance from Frederick to the junction of the Washington City Road.

The passes of the almost impassable Alleghanies, have been made passable, and are daily passed by a host of passengers with great speed, if not great safety; for the truth is, that fear of accident does not seem to be a part of the composition of the drivers over these dangerous mountain roads, for they crack the whip and rattle down the long declivities much after the manner that we are all heedlessly rattling through the world. We are all sure to reach the end of the road, but not always "right side up with care."

It was with no small degree of interest that I looked upon these hills piled on hills. For 16 years I had been treading the fertile plains of the west, and in all that time had not seen an eminence worthy of the name of mountain. Here were old acquaintance that should never be forget. And here upon every little spot of level ground was perched the hut of a hardy mountaineer, as blythe, as happy and contented as him who could count his thousands of acres of far more fertile and feasible soil of the west. I could not but ask, "why do you toil here upon these rocks and hills?" and yet perhaps I should do wrong to urge them to give up situations, with which they are content, for the more promising plains that spread out invitingly and uncultivated away beyond the "beautiful river."

Of my doings at Washington in regard to the contemplated National Society, you are acquainted. Of the state

of agricultural improvement around the capital of our country, I cannot speak encouragingly. In fact, to me, the quality of the soil presents a very forbidding aspect. By far the greatest portion of it looks to me as though it would cost more than it would come to, to put it into a good state of cultivation. The "skinning system" seems to have been thoroughly practiced here, where originally there was but little to skin, until the fertility has been so completely skinned from the soil, that I should think the present cultivators would find some difficulty in raising enough to keep their own skins full.

But there are some noble and spirited friends of agricultural improvement in and around Washington, among whom Mr. Ellsworth stands foremost. While I was there, he was engaged in an experiment of making a cheap machine for making a ditch and bank fence, of which the public will hereafter hear something. He is constant and unceasing in his efforts to promote the agricultural interest of the United States, and has partially succeeded in converting the Patent office into an agricultural bureau. He has purchased a few acres of the "vacant lots," which abound upon the original great plat of this *to be* great city, for the purpose of trying different kinds of seeds, and making experiments and illustrations in farming, for the benefit of the community. His plan of distributing seeds throughout the country has been of great advantage to the country, at small cost to the government. Every friend of the measure should feel it a duty to forward to him for distribution, a small quantity of every rare seed that he may possess. And I hope that every friend who attends the first meeting of the National Agricultural Society on the 15th Dec. next, will at least take his pockets full of such seeds as he may happen to possess, for the purpose of exchange.

Washington city, like a great many other great things in this great country, was begun on too great a scale. I judge from appearances, that the citizens are not strong

advocates of "internal improvements," so far as their own corporation is concerned.

The public buildings are the great, I may say the only ornaments of Washington. To me the Patent office possesses the greatest interest. Independent of the models, nearly all of which that were burnt having been replaced, there is the great "Hall of Manufactures," in which it is designed to exhibit specimens of all kinds of manufactures of the United States, forming one of the most interesting collections in the country. It is also intended to exhibit specimens of every known kind of agricultural implement, from the earliest ages to this time; also a collection of all kinds of grains and seeds.

The Smithsonian collection of curiosities, and also that of the exploring expedition, together with the gallery of Indian portraits, are now exhibited in this building, forming in the whole, an extensive free museum.

From Washington to Baltimore, along the line of the rail-road, the land is mostly miserably poor and uncultivated. It is surprising to see what a mass of human beings daily pass over this road. If half of our agricultural population pursued their calling with the earnestness that multitudes of men and women seem to pursue some ignus fatuus over stage route, rail-road and steam-boat route, they would accomplish wonders.

It was a lovely pleasant day that I arrived in this busy city, celebrated for its monuments and pretty women. The thriving appearance of Baltimore, indicates a thriving state of agriculture in the vicinity. Among the ornaments of the place I cannot omit to mention the beautiful and romantic resting-place for the dead, which I had an opportunity of visiting during a ride with Robert Sinclair, Jr.,[1] out to the nursery of his father at Clairmont, at which place I found *improvement* strongly developed. I also found a hearty welcome, and

[1] Robert Sinclair, Jr., well-known manufacturer of agricultural implements, Baltimore. Had a large southern trade. Contributor to the *Cultivator, American Farmer.*

all the "trimmings," to make my visit interesting. Besides his flourishing nursery business, Mr. S. has a very snug cocoonery, which he finds quite profitable. Having made free use of lime upon his worms this season, he has found them quite healthy. Mr. Sinclair, Jr. has in the city one of the most extensive agricultural ware-houses, perhaps in the U. S. A large portion of the implements that he sells are manufactured under the same roof and in such a manner that he can warrant them good. From the polite attention bestowed upon me, a stranger, I am warranted in the conclusion that my agricultural friends who have occasion to send orders to this establishment for any kind of implements or seeds, will be done by as they would be done unto.

Another of the pleasant days of my life was that in which I made the acquaintance of Mr. Sands,[1] the publisher of the American Farmer, the oldest agricultural paper in the Union. To him and his lovely family I am indebted for a very pleasant visit—such an one as thousands of the friends of agricultural improvement of the present day delight to interchange with one another. Mr. Sands, although grown up in a city, and I might say in a printing office, appears more like a plain unassuming farmer than anything else. He is not only an advocate, like nearly all the leading agriculturalists, of temperance, but is also the publisher of a temperance paper. The principal circulation of the Farmer is at the south, and I earnestly hope will long continue to be commensurate with its and its worthy publisher's worth.

I also visited Mr. Hussey's[2] manufactory of his cele-

[1] Samuel Sands, for many years editor and publisher of the *American Farmer*, Baltimore.

[2] Obed Hussey, born in Maine in 1792; died in 1860. Invented a machine for reaping grain in 1833 which he manufactured at Baltimore from 1838 to 1858. In that year he sold his patents and retired from active business. Hussey was Cyrus Hall McCormick's earliest and most formidable rival in the period when both men were endeavoring to educate the public to the value of their machines. Hussey's machine was in reality more of a mower than

brated and valuable reaping machine. This machine is beyond doubt a very useful implement for the farmer, particularly upon very smooth land, such, for instance, as the western prairies. There is, however, in the west a new harvesting machine that bids fair to do away with machines for reaping. It is a machine that actually gathers the grain out of the heads of the standing grain, as clean as it can be thrashed by a machine, leaving the straw standing in the field. I had seen the model of the machine at Chicago last spring, and most unexpectedly to-day I met with my friend Wright, editor of the Chicago Agriculturist, who informs me that the machine has been completed and used during the late harvest, and that it operates to perfection—with three horses, gathering from 10 to 15 acres of wheat a day.

Baltimore also boasts of another lately invented machine, that appears to me to be one that will prove of immense advantage to the community. This is "Page's Saw Mill."[1] The saw is a circular one, and it may be driven by horse or any other power, and is so portable that a mill large enough to saw a log two feet through and twelve feet long, with all the apparatus can be put into a two horse wagon, and taken into the woods and with the assistance of two men, set up and set to work in less than two days, and with the power of the two horses. I dare not say how much lumber *it will* cut per day, but think that you will be satisfied with a thousand feet, although the patentee would not be. In fact, no invention has met my eye that seems better calculatd to be useful to the agricultural community than Page's portable saw mill.

a reaper, and subsequent development of that machine was based on the principles of his device. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 9:431-32, 11:607-9.

[1] George Page, inventor and manufacturer of a portable sawmill propelled by a portable steam engine. See *Cultivator*, 9:59-60 (April, 1842).

Here as elsewhere wherever I go, I find an earnest spirit pervading all the friends of agricultural improvement, that speaks in cheering tones that our cause is in the ascendant.

To-morrow morning I shall again roll along toward new scenes, some of which I hope will prove sufficiently interesting to induce me again to communicate with you. Till then, accept the good wishes of SOLON ROBINSON.

LETTER FROM SOLON ROBINSON.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE FARMERS' CABINET.[1]

[Philadelphia *Farmers' Cabinet, and American Herd-Book*, 6:92-93; Oct., 1841]

[September 20, 1841]

AFTER spending a week in and about your city, I cannot bear to leave it without a parting word to the many warm-hearted friends that I have found here. I am one that holds that self-esteem is a virtue, for it is that which makes us all proud of doing good. It is that which makes me proud of the reception that I have met with among a very large number of the agriculturists of this vicinity. But it is not a kind of self-esteem that makes me proud of the honour conferred upon me personally, for I am a stranger, personally unknown, even by character, except by my writings; but on account of the cause that I advocate have I been most flatteringly received wherever I have been. Oh, sir, the spirit of improvement is abroad. That "band of brotherhood" that I long to see cementing us all together, is forming. That joyful day is coming, when all the agriculturists of the land will feel as though they belonged to one family, and that their occupation was, and of right ought to be, the most honoured of all others.

On Tuesday last, I paid a visit to several of the farms upon the far-famed Brandywine hills of Westchester. If,

[1] James Pedder. See *ante*, 214 n.

Nebuchadnezzar-like, I am ever "turned out to grass," may it be upon such fat pastures as I saw there. At the farm of Samuel Worth,[1] I found a most beautiful drove of Ohio oxen—fine, large, red, and upon such grass I need not say, very fat. This I find is a common practice, to drive lean oxen from Ohio, to take on a coat of Pennsylvania fat; and from this source comes the fine juicy beef with which your fine market houses abound. Many of these same cattle are driven into Ohio while quite young, from still further West, so that the places of their nativity and death are often a thousand or more miles apart. And as the great West improves, her almost boundless pastures will furnish an everlasting supply for the Eastern markets.

At the farm of Joseph Cope,[2] I found an excellent specimen of South Down sheep, and a choice Durham bull, selected by himself in England. It would do some of our Western farmers (slovens, rather,) good to visit this farm, to see a place for every thing, and every thing in its place, in doors and out. For be it known that there is one within the house well worthy of the name of "Farmer's Wife."

At the farm of Paschall Morris,[3] we—I forgot to say that in this excursion, I was accompanied by Caleb N. Bennet,[4] of Albany, whom I met in Philadelphia—we saw much to admire. A farm under a high state of improvement—a beautiful lot of short-horns—Berkshire hogs,

[1] Samuel Worth (born Chester County, Pennsylvania, December 6, 1779; died August 20, 1862), probably a descendant of Thomas Worth who emigrated to Pennsylvania at the time of William Penn. The Worth family devoted their time principally to agricultural pursuits. *Historic Homes and Institutions and . . . Memoirs of Chester and Delaware Counties, Pennsylvania,* 1:190 (Lewis Publishing Company, 1904).

[2] Joseph Cope, of East Bradford Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania.

[3] Paschall Morris, of Allerton Farm, East Bradford Township, Chester County.

[4] Caleb N. Bement.

and Bakewell sheep—a very neat dairy house, with a churn driven by horse-power. Mr. Morris makes butter for the dignitaries of Washington, and here, let me assure them, that they may be assured of the perfect neatness of the manufactory. Mr. Morris is a young Philadelphian of wealth and intelligence, who has devoted himself to a noble pursuit; and his lovely wife is a sweet flower, that adorns her pleasant home, and makes the visiters at her hospitable mansion feel "at home." I have neglected to mention that we arrived in the evening at Westchester, the delightfully situated seat of justice of Chester county, and were soon visited by Dr. Darlington,[1] a well-known agricultural writer, with a cordial invitation to breakfast which we accepted; after which the Doctor drove us over to Mr. Morris', but was prevented by official engagements from spending the day with us. He however, transferred us to good hands, and a good carriage, in which Mr. Morris spent the day, until late in the evening. And his acts of kindness, similar to which are now everywhere to be seen among the "strong bond of brotherhood" which is forming among the friends of agriculture, did not end with that day, for at an early hour the next morning, his carriage was at the door to take us down to the agricultural fair, at Wilmington, whither we were also accompanied by Joseph Cope.

But the limits of this letter will not permit me to record the high praise that I intend to do hereafter, to Wilmington; not so much on account of the display of stock and implements, as upon the ennobling spirit that seemed to pervade the whole population. The Horticultural exhibition, which is connected with the Agricultural Society, showed the power of "female influence," and the room in the evening, showed a greater amount of female

[1] William Darlington, born April 28, 1782, at Dilworthtown, Chester County, Pennsylvania; died April 23, 1863. Noted botanist and horticultural writer. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 5:78-79.

loveliness than is often to be met with upon such occasions.

The excellent dinner of the Society, from which "all intoxicating liquor" was banished, was one of the most pleasant of my life. After dinner, we partook of the "real old Virginia hospitality" of Dr. J. W. Thomson,[1] the President of the society; and in the morning I had to deny myself the great pleasure that I should have enjoyed in spending a few days among the large circle of friends that I found, (although a stranger,) in Delaware. Both at Westchester and Wilmington, the subject of organising the *National Society of Agriculture*, was taken up with enthusiasm, and approving resolutions passed and delegates appointed.

I beg you to assure the numerous friends of agricultural improvement in and about Philadelphia, whom I was prevented from visiting on account of my pressing engagements, that I duly appreciate their good wishes for the success of the cause I am engaged in; assure them also, that success is on the high road to prosperous completion.

Towards you and your readers, I remain most respectfully your friend—in the language of the lamented and honoured Buel—

"With affectionate regard,"

SOLON ROBINSON.

Philadelphia Sept. 20, 1841.

[1] James W. Thompson, M. D., native of Virginia, and graduate of the University of Virginia. Began practice of medicine at Wilmington, Delaware, in 1830; member of State Medical Society, 1828; president, 1841. President of State Agricultural Society; president of Agricultural Society at New Castle, Delaware, 1842. Contributor to *Farmers' Cabinet*, 1842. Died, 1882. *Genealogical History of the State of Delaware*, 2:1278 (J. M. Runk & Co., Chambersburg, Pa., 1899).

To the Editor of the Farmers' Cabinet. Advantages of Travel.

[Philadelphia *Farmers' Cabinet, and American Herd-Book,* 6:178; Jan., 1842]

[November 22, 1841]

Worthy Friend.—I believe that you will be gratified to hear that I am once more in the enjoyment of the comforts of *home;* for however it may be less splendid than many of the mansions in which I have enjoyed hospitality during the past summer, it is yet a happy home—the home of the wife of my bosom, and the children of our love. It is the home of those who had, for many days before my arrival, been anxiously looking and praying for my safe return; for at this late season of the year, a voyage around our northern lakes is always attended with anxiety, if not danger. But at length I came in health, and found health, and an abundance of joy! It is good for a man to be separated from his family occasionally, merely to enable him and them to enjoy the great gratification of meeting after a long absence.

You will please assure your family, that the joy of meeting my own wife and children, has not crowded out an affectionate remembrance of them, and therefore you will make my best respects to them. I hope it will be long before they do, or wish to, forget their old friend of the Western Prairies.

My late tour through the United States has formed many links with my heart, that will always vibrate to the tune of sweet and pleasant sensations. I am well persuaded that I return home a better man than I left; at all events, a wiser one. I have formed a great many new and excellent acquaintances, and I have seen a good share of what every man ought to see—that is his *own* country, at least before he yearns after foreign ones. My opportunity to learn a great deal that will be useful to me through life, has been greater than many travellers, because my association has been with the nobility of the

land—the cultivators of the soil. I have seen and observed the different kinds of soil, and mode of cultivation, and the different kinds of stock, and their adaptation to different sections of the country. I have carefully examined a great many improved implements of husbandry; and above all things, I have observed that there is an evident spirit of improvement abroad that has, and that will elevate the character and standing of the agricultural population of the United States. I have found a strong evidence of this good spirit in the cordial manner that I have everywhere been received throughout my journey. I had no claims from political notoriety or official station to draw attention, but everywhere I found myself known and welcomed, as a friend of the agricultural interest of the country, in a manner that astonished me not a little. I have often asked myself the question, What have I done to cause all this? It is true that I had devoted a share of the talent which nature had endowed me with, for the benefit of my agricultural brethren; but I did not feel that on that account I merited the honour and respect which I have met with. But let this fact encourage others to do likewise. Let them bear in mind that a good reputation, so easily earned is worth their attention, and will prove of a value that cannot be computed in dollars and cents. I have reason to hope, although I may never meet a return in that currency for the time and money spent during the past summer, that I have done some good. I have aided in awakening the public mind to pay more attention to the best interest of the country; and I am fully persuaded, if agricultural writers would take the trouble to make themselves more personally known, that they would increase their own usefulness, while adding days of pleasure to their lives.

I reached home on the 13th instant, by way of the lakes, from Buffalo to Chicago, having had rather a rough passage, though not more than could be expected at this late season of the year. I hope to be able, after I recover from the fatigue of my journey, to let you and your read-

ers hear from me occasionally. I remain with respect and esteem,

Your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

Lake Court House, Ind., Nov. 22, 1841.

SOMETHING ABOUT WESTERN PRAIRIES.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 1:14-16, Apr., 1842]

[December 10, 1841]

To the Editor of the American Agriculturist.

IN addition to your note, suggesting that eastern readers are ever anxious to learn facts about the "great West," I have received a great number of inquiries, some of which I will answer through your columns.

And although the matter may not be altogether upon the science of agriculture, it may be such as will induce scientific reading, in the contents of agricultural journals.

In my late tour through the Eastern States, how often I heard the exclamation, "I do wish I could see a prairie!" "How do they look?" "Ah, well! I shouldn't like to live on one, they are *so level.*" "An't it very troublesome getting about through the tall grass?" "How do you plough them?"

Notwithstanding that others, as well as myself, have often, both publicly and privately, answered these and many other similar questions, "the demand is increasing," and the public are "like as two peas," to my little children, with their, "do now father, tell that story again."

In the first place then, my dear reader, I also wish you could see a prairie. You would feel as you never felt be-

[1] The editor excused himself "for making public a private communication," on the ground that he "knew not how to debar his [Robinson's] friends . . . from the perusal of a document so honourable to the head and heart of the writer." He concluded with the wish that Robinson might "long continue an ornament to his country, a treasure to his neighborhood, and a blessing to his family."

fore. You would feel as I once did, when for the first time I stood upon the edge of the prairie upon which I now reside. "It was about noon of a beautiful October day, when we emerged from the wood, and for miles around stretched forth one broad expanse of clear, open land. I stood alone, wrapt up in that peculiar sensation that man only feels when beholding a broad rolling prairie for the first time—an indescribable delightful feeling. Oh, what a rich mine of wealth lay outstretched before me."

And although that was seven years ago, yet almost the whole of that mine of wealth still holds its hidden and unsought for treasures. No plough or spade has broken the sod of ages; no magician has appeared with the husbandman's magic wand and said to the coarse and useless grass that has grown for centuries, "Presto, be gone," give place to the lovely Ceres with her golden sheaves.

And here, methinks I hear some reader exclaim, "Well now, I guess it an't so plaguy rich a'ter all, or it would'nt lay there uncultivated." Little does he know or think as he digs in the corn among the stones of New England, what vast quantities of such land lie waste in the West, and how few there are there to improve them; and what is worse, how indolent a great portion of that few are. Talk of the country being sickly, why the worst epidemic that ever raged in any country, is that idleness which fixes itself, incubus like, upon the whole population of an extraordinary fertile soil.

I am sorry that I am not able to answer the second question, even satisfactorily to myself. But who that ever undertook, ever satisfied his inquirers as to how a prairie looks, while in a state of nature. The reason is that there is nothing analogous, to which one can compare it, in a thickly settled country. But suppose that the reader fancies the country with which he is best acquainted in an old settled country, entirely destitute of buildings or fences, or in fact any mark of civilization,

with all the hills reduced so as to make a gently rolling surface, the woodland to remain as it is, and the entire surface of cleared land covered with grass—that upon the upland thick and short, and in the low lands one or two feet high, and in the swamps four or five feet, and he may have a very faint idea *how a prairie looks.*

So you see they are not so "very level." Gently undulating, applies to all prairie countries within my knowledge. Sometimes, though rarely, hills occur that are too steep to cultivate conveniently, and sometimes rocky bluffs. But a general characteristic in this region is destituteness of stone, except a few boulders of granite, that have come from parts unknown.

The streams are most generally muddy bottoms. The timber in the groves or islands that abound throughout this sea of grass, is most commonly short, and grows thin upon the ground, without underbrush, except at the edges, where the hazel bush seems to be the advanced guard, and is constantly encroaching upon the prairie. There are large tracts of timber land called "barrens," which are about half way between prairie and timber land—the tree standing apart like an orchard, and the ground covered with grass, the sod of which is much less tough than that on the prairie.

One very prominent feature of a prairie, I should mention, and that is the constant and ever varying succession of flowers from spring till fall.

A singular and false notion prevails about the height of the grass, and that it must be difficult getting about. It is not even difficult for a sheep, as the grass never grows high enough upon the dry land to impede or hide them. Near the banks of streams, or in marshes, it is like going through a field of oats or wheat. And it is in such places that grass is cut for hay—some very good—some good—and some that the less said about, the smaller the sin committed.

But as for pasturage, no country can excel this. The milk, butter, cheese and beef attest the rich juiciness of

the feed. But we lack the beautiful blue grass pastures of Kentucky, for fall feed. Even now, near the middle of December, notwithstanding we have had a hard fall for this country, this grass is green and good. Even timothy or red top would yet afford "a good bite."

The next wonder is about ploughing. And if, my dear reader, you who have ploughed so many acres of green sward with old "Duke & Darby," could only see a "prairie team," you would wonder still more.

Fancy upon a level smooth piece of ground, free from sticks, stumps and stones, a team of four, five, or even six yoke of oxen, hitched to a pair of cart wheels, and to them hitched a plough with a beam fourteen feet long, and the share, &c. of which weigh from sixty to one hundred and twenty-five pounds, of wrought iron and steel, and which cuts a furrow from sixteen to twenty-four inches wide, and you will figure the appearance of a "breaking team" in operation. If you ask me if this is necessary, I can only tell you that I suppose it is, for it is *fashionable.*

I do believe though, that a smaller plough and less team would be better for the land, though it is said it would be more expensive ploughing. It is true that the sod is more tough than can be believed by those who have never ploughed it. It requires the plough to be kept very sharp, and for this purpose the ploughman is always provided with a large file with which he keeps a keen edge as possible upon the share and coulter.

Such a team ploughs from one to two acres a day, usually about four inches deep, which is not near down to the bottom of the roots, so that the sod turned up affords but a scanty covering for grain that is sowed upon it at first, yet very fine crops of wheat are raised in this way. It is also a common practice to break up in the spring and drop corn in every second or third furrow, and from which twenty or thirty bushels to the acre are often gathered, nothing having ever been done to it after planting. It takes two or three years for

these sods to become thoroughly decomposed, and then the soil is of a light, loose, black vegetable mould, very easily stirred by the plough, but of a nature that it adheres to the plough in a troublesome manner. In fact, no plough has ever been found to keep itself clear; and the ploughman is generally obliged to carry with him a small wooden paddle, with which to clear off the adhering mass of dirt upon the mould board With this exception, the prairie soil is generally one of the easiest in the world to till, and of course remarkably fertile.

By far the greatest portion is based upon a sub-soil of clay, though in many places the sub-soil is sand or gravel, and there are large tracts of which the surface is of this material. The streams are often broad and nearly covered with vegetable growth, in some instances to that degree that sheets of water many rods wide actually burn over during the autumnal fires.

Notwithstanding the many "interesting accounts of burning prairies," the fire upon a dry prairie in a calm time does not blaze as high as it would in an old stubble field. But in the marshes or wet prairies, it sometimes rages with most magnificent grandeur.

There is one more question often asked, that deserves some notice; and that is, "How is this land ever to be fenced?" This is a question that deserves serious consideration.

The settlements already made are upon the smaller prairies, the centre of which are not more than four or five miles from timber, or along the border of "the Grand Prairie," taking care not to extend out beyond the reach of convenient woodland. But there are many places where the groves are barely sufficient to furnish the land most contiguous, and vast tracts of prairie are to be found ten or fifteen miles from timber. That these tracts will forever remain uncultivated, cannot for a moment be thought of. That timber can be planted and raised in abundance is certain. It is equally certain that they can be fenced with ditches, and perhaps with hedges,

though the experiments that have as yet been made in the United States to enclose land with hedges have generally proved failures.

The most feasible plan, it seems to me, would be to enclose large tracts by ditching, and cultivate the land without division fences, even between many occupants. Such is the mode in many parts of Europe, and more particularly in China. Or this kind of land could be profitably improved by grazing herds of cattle and sheep under the care of shepherds. Houses of a most comfortable kind can be built of clay without burning into brick, and the expense of hauling lumber for roofs and inside work would be trifling. The only difficulty would be fuel. In many parts of the West coal exists in abundance, and where that is not to be had, the expense of hauling wood over a smooth and nearly level country would not be a serious obstacle. It is also thought that peat will be found abundant.

At present, however, there is an abundance of unoccupied land so convenient to timber as to be easily fenced in the common way, with Virginia or worm fence, and the oak timber of this region is very durable.

I have heretofore published several articles of advice to western emigrants, which I have much reason to believe have been well received by the public, and I have received many earnest solicitations to make further remarks upon the same subject. But my present letter has become too long to do it now, but if my health is spared, I hope to have the will and ability to do so hereafter.

In the mean time, permit me to say that although I am a new correspondent to your new paper, yet I hope you may so meet with public favor as to be able to write yourselves down to the public as I do now,

Your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., Dec. 10, 1841.

Traveling Memoranda—No. 7.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 9:35; Feb., 1842]

[December 10?, 1841]

Editors of Cultivator—On the 13th of November, I brought my long agricultural tour to a close, in that most pleasant of all other places, to the fond husband and father, HOME. It will be gratifying to you, and a great number of your readers, I am well assured by the kind treatment I met with among them, to learn that I reached my "home in the west" in safety, and found my family in health and comfort.

You are aware that it was my intention again to leave home about this time, to attend the first meeting of the National Agricultural Society at Washington, on the 15th of this month. But circumstances beyond my control, one of which is a severe cold, contracted during my tempestuous voyage round the lakes, have induced me reluctantly to forego this duty and pleasure—that is, the pleasure of the hope of doing good, which would have overbalanced all the fatigue of a winter journey, if my health had been such that I had dared risk the undertaking.

My tour through the United States forms an era in my life that I may reflect upon during the remainder of my time, with more interest than I can upon any other period of my life. It has given me the strongest assurance that a spirit has been awakened throughout the country, within a few years past, that is calculated to do more good than all the political vagaries which have of late agitated the world.

The inquiry is in every man's mouth, "what shall be done to improve the agricultural interest of the country?" The extensive and increasing circulation of agricultural papers, the increasing interest in attendance upon the fairs of agricultural societies, all speak well for the cause of the farming interest, the first and best interest of this at present great, and to be greater, agricultural country. I have been made aware that great good could be accom-

plished by public spirited individuals traveling as I have done through the country, stirring up and awakening the lethargic feeling of the farmers, and urging them to arouse themselves to take the stand in the first rank of society, that their occupation entitles them to hold. The prejudice against "book farming" is fast giving way to a growing anxiety after scientific knowledge, as applicable to the cultivating the soil.

I have been astonished at the interest manifested to become acquainted with one who had no claims to notice except as an agricultural writer; and proud as I may justly feel of the honors heaped upon me wherever I went, I am only proud on account of the convincing proof it gives me of the noble disposition of my countrymen to honor those who are devoted to the object, and who ardently desire to see improvement in the bulwarks of society, rapidly increasing.

Rapid increase of wealth, in speculation or stock jobbing, does not always indicate the best state of morals in society. But show me a community rapidly increasing in wealth by improvement in agricultural pursuits, and I will insure you that the morals of that community are in a healthy state.

But I forget that my moralizing does not continue my journey, and that there are sundry small items in my note book, that may be more interesting to your readers than my present writing.

My letters which you have published have been dated at various points on the road, but as I have progressed more rapidly in my traveling than in my writing, I must now make up lost time at home. As I passed along, I saw so much to interest me, that my letters unavoidably run into particulars, perhaps tediously lengthy.

My last, I believe, was from Baltimore. From thence I took the Philadelphia rail road, which passes over a great deal of poor, level country, and an uncommon number of long bridges. At Wilmington, I visited Dr. Lockwood and Dr. J. W. Thompson, two prominent friends of

agriculture, as I find to be more often the case among physicians than any other profession.

Dr. Thompson is President of the Agricultural Society, and to his energetic exertions, in a considerable degree, may be attributed the great good that has been effected by this society. The power of one man to accomplish wonders is indeed wonderful. By the judicious use of manure, marl, and lime, the poor worn out farms of this part of Delaware have been doubled in value within a few years past, and now show a state of fertility that was considered impossible for them ever again to attain, after having been "skinned" for more than a hundred years.

I visited one of Dr. Thompson's farms, upon which I saw a peach orchard of an hundred and fifty acres. He also keeps one hundred cows, for the purpose of raising calves for the Philadelphia market. As soon as one calf is taken off, another, which is purchased for the purpose, is put on. Some of the cows had two calves, and some calves had two cows. This way of using milk he finds very profitable.

While viewing his peach orchard, I learned a fact well worth the attention of all peach growers. Let the trees branch as much as possible from the ground, and never cut off a limb that is broken down by an overload of fruit. If it hangs on by wood enough to keep it alive, let it lay, and it will sprout up next year most luxuriantly, and then produce the finest kind of peaches.[1] The ground between the trees is kept well plowed.

Around Wilmington there is a good deal of thorn hedge, but it does not generally look flourishing. But the general state of agriculture does, as I was still more convinced by what I subsequently witnessed at the Fair of the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, which I attended on the 15th of September. At this fair, I saw Mr. Canby's celebrated Durham cow, Blossom, that gave

[1] Commentator, in his review of the February *Cultivator*, took exception to this advice about peach trees, and advocated judicious pruning. *Cultivator*, 9:79 (May, 1842).

36 quarts of milk a day, and 17 lbs. of butter a week. Although a fine looking cow, I have seen many others that, for appearance only, would take the premium. There was also exhibited a common cow, and a very ordinary looking one too, that afforded 15 lbs. of butter a week.

As an evidence of the flourishing condition of this Society, I will mention that they have a considerable fund on hand, out of which their annual dinner is provided, free for all members and invited guests, among whom I had the honor to enjoy one of the most agreeable public dinners that I have ever partaken of. And the pleasure was not a little heightened by the presence of the lovely goddess of Temperance.

I saw here the sample of sugar made from corn stalks, and became acquainted with the manufacturer, and heard him describe the process, of which much has been published of late. I am inclined to think that this is not all humbug. Should it be found successful on further experiment, the advantage to the west will prove incalculable; for here the corn can be sown broad-cast, upon cheap land, easily cultivated without manure, and yet produce a great crop.

It was painful to me that I had no spare time to spend with the numerous interesting acquaintances that I made here.

I left this delightful town the next morning after the fair, in company with several gentlemen who formed a delegation from the Philadelphia Society, to interchange civilities with their Delaware friends. This is exactly as it should be: it keeps up friendly social intercourse, and tends to increase knowledge and happiness. The visits, too, of distinguished strangers, at such a time, serves as a most valuable stimulant to incite praiseworthy exertions. This is a matter well worthy the attention of all agricultural societies. Send delegations to visit one another.

While in Philadelphia, I met with our mutual friend, C. N. Bement, and with him visited several places of interest, including the Wilmington Fair. We also visited Westchester, and enjoyed the hospitality of Dr. Darlington, known as one of the most scientific writers on agriculture. We also visited the Paschal Morris' and Joseph Cope's farms, as well as many other of the highly cultivated farms of the Brandywine hills.

Mr. Cope is known as an importer of Durham stock and South Down sheep, a beautiful lot of which he had on hand. I look upon this as the best breed of sheep for general use in the country. Those desirous of purchasing, may depend upon the genuine article from Mr. Cope.

Mr. Morris is a large breeder of Durhams. We saw here a horse power churn, which makes 100 lbs. of butter at one operation. The apparatus is simple and cheap. Any person desirous of obtaining information about it, will find by making application to Mr. M., that he is a "gentleman farmer"—which means a man of intelligence, and who is always ready to devote his time and abilities to the promotion of improvement among his brethren.

I wish he would also publish a description, and his opinion, of a wheat sowing machine that we saw at his farm.

At one of the farms which we visited, I was struck with the appearance of a fine lot of fat oxen, fed entirely upon grass, which is one of the most luxuriant and profitable crops that grow upon these hills. These oxen are driven, while lean, from the north part of Ohio, and no doubt many of them had while young been driven from the interior of Indiana or Illinois to Ohio, there used for work while in their prime, and then driven to Pennsylvania to eat up the surplus grass, and in turn to be eaten up by the surplus population of Philadelphia.

At the same farm, I saw a very simple and cheap apparatus that forces water forty or fifty rods, up a steep hill, to the house and barn. A lever, about twenty feet long, with a weight at one end and a water box at

the other, is hung in the stream, and covered over with a roof, around which, in winter time, straw is placed to prevent freezing. While the end of the lever upon which is the box, is up, a stream of water runs in, and the weight of that overbalances the weighted end of the lever, and down goes the box, striking a pin in its descent that opens a valve and lets out the water, when up it comes for a new supply, each movement of the lever making a stroke of a force pump that sends the water in one perpetual, never tiring stream up the hill.

Instead of feeling as though we were troublesome visitors, seeking our own gratification, we were everywhere made to feel more like one affectionate brother visiting another. We were assured that our hosts rather considered it an honor than a burthen to entertain us. Oh! how I wish agricultural brethren would extend the custom of visiting one another. Much good and much pleasure would come of it.

After our return to Philadelphia, we went, in company with the excellent editor of the Farmers' Cabinet, a short trip into New Jersey, and at the farm of Mr. Edward Tonkin,[1] about fourteen miles from Camden, saw some of the finest specimens of fat Durham oxen, I venture to say, in the United States. Mr. T. is a large breeder of Durhams, and has done what but few breeders would do, that is, to alter some of his best bull calves for the purpose of showing what can be done with this breed of cattle for beef. He also has one spayed heifer. These beeves are now about five years old, and it was the opinion of several gentlemen present that the largest ox would weigh 3,000 pounds. They are to be fed another year. Taken together, they are one of the most beautiful shows of fat cattle I ever saw.

On our return, we visited the old "Haddonfield house," built of bricks and timber imported from England. We now look upon the importation of bricks as ridiculous.

[1] Edward Tonkin, of Clarksboro, near Woodbury, Gloucester County.

When shall we get our eyes open wide enough to see that many of our present importations are more ridiculous, and more detrimental to the best interests of the country?

This house, still in a good state of preservation, is owned by a gentleman by the name of Wood, who owns "*those* chickens" that can eat corn off of a flour barrel standing on end. They are tall subjects.

I was surprised to learn that in this state, so celebrated for peaches, the trees have entirely failed. New Jersey peaches are now no more.

And now, my dear readers, if you are as tired of reading as I am of writing, you will be glad that I come here to an abrupt close—promising, however, that you shall again hear from your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., Dec. 1841.

AG. REPOSITORY AT WASHINGTON.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:5-6; Jan., 1842]

LAKE C. H., Ia., Dec. 15, 1841.

Dear Sir,—You are well aware of the deep interest that the Hon. H. L. Ellsworth, Comr. of the Patent Office, takes in all matters that tend to "elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil," as well as the interest of the mechanics and manufacturers of our country.

The following is a copy of a note addressed to me while at Washington, during my late and interesting agricultural tour through the United States. And as this is the day upon which the friends of a National Agricultural Society, meet at Washington to form a Constitution, which meeting I have been prevented from attending, mainly in consequence of a severe cold which I contracted during my passage home in November, on our Northern lakes, I feel as though I could not better employ myself, than in drawing public attention to the subject of the letter, which follows:

"WASHINGTON CITY, Sept. 6, 1841.

"HON. SOLON ROBINSON:

"Dear Sir,—I cannot permit you to leave us without expressing to you my warmest respects, for the interest that you take in the subject upon which you are now making your tour of observation. It would be extremely gratifying to me to be able to accompany you. I am sure that it will be not only interesting to yourself, but to all the friends of the best interests of our country with whom you have the pleasure of meeting.

"I am happy to know that you are received as you deserve to be, wherever you go. Permit me again to solicit your aid, as opportunity may offer, to aid the Commissioner of Patents in those two much cherished objects, viz: a collection of samples of manufactured articles from every establishment in the United States; including, *especially*, all agricultural implements used in this country.

"The collection of all these things, when they will be exhibited to the public, exactly in the form in which they are used, will not only be interesting but highly beneficial to individuals.

"I wish also to collect samples of all kinds of grain, and seeds, not only for exhibition, but distribution.

"It is the object of the National Gallery, to form one of the most interesting collections that ever was brought together; and if public spirited individuals will second the efforts of the Commissioner, it will soon be accomplished.

"Agents in different sea-ports, (see circular of last spring) will receive and forward articles free of expense.

I have the honor and pleasure to subscribe myself, your agricultural friend,

H. L. ELLSWORTH."

Whether I was "received as I deserved to be," I cannot say; but certain it is, I was everywhere received with distinguished honor and cordial good feeling, and no where more so than by that enthusiastic friend of agriculture whose name I have just written.

And now will "public spirited individuals second the efforts of the Commissioner?" I am sure they will if they learn more of the object. And for information upon this point, let me state, that a large portion of the new Patent Office building is appropriated to the purpose of holding and exhibiting samples of all kinds of articles manufactured in the United States, as well as the growth of all kinds of grain, flax, hemp, silk, &c.&c., with specimens of seeds of all kinds, all neatly arranged in glass cases, labelled to show where manufactured or grown.

For example, what could be more interesting to the agriculturist, than to view in one case, not only the grain, but the growth of all the varities of Indian corn from every State in the Union. The "Hall of Manufactures" occupies the whole of the upper floor in one room, 274 feet long; the capacity of which will be further increased by a gallery on each side along the whole length. When completed and filled according to the original design, it will form one of the most interesting museums in the world, free to every visitor at our national capitol. In the basement story, extensive rooms are appropriated to receive every known implement of agriculture, in full size. Here will be seen every variety of plow, from that of the ancient Eqyptian, to that of the most approved model of the present day.

It is presumed that every manufacturer will avail himself of the opportunity to exhibit specimens of his goods or implements. Although the West is young in manufacturing, she can furnish some of the noblest specimens of the growth of her rich soil.

Let us then prepare to furnish a good supply of Western products. Of course there will be some duplicates, out of which the best will be selected for exhibition.

It would also add to the interest to send specimens and descriptions of the soil in which the articles grew.

Every person who has examined the models in the Patent Office, will perceive at once how much more interesting will be a show of agricultural implements in full

size. Every manufacturer of such implements would be doubly paid for the article furnished, as it would be one of the best advertisements that he could possibly make. Every member of Congress, who had the least regard for the interest of his constituents, would visit the Hall, and obtain a fund of information by examination and comparison, which he could communicate to the farmers in his district. And here let me remark, that the time is rapidly approaching when the mere political hack, will find it so much to his *interest*, that he will pay more attention to the wants of this class; yea, this immense majority of the people in this government.

It was my intention to have commented somewhat upon the present contents of this national museum; but as I am getting tiresomely lengthy, I will defer it till another day.

In the meantime I remain yours, and the readers' of your paper, humble servant and friend,

SOLON ROBINSON

A CHEAP ICE HOUSE, A GOOD CELLAR FOR ROOTS.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:15; Feb., 1842[1]]

[December 31, 1841]

MY WORTHY FRIEND—You ask for more communications. Now the fact is that my name has become so common in agricultural papers, that I have reason to believe that something new from some new writer, would be much more interesting to readers, and that when they see my name they will exclaim, "what Monsieur Tonson come again," and pass over this hackneyed name with the well founded belief that no new thing can come from such an old fountain. But I will once more run that risk.

Many persons are deterred from putting up ice, because they cannot afford to build an ice house. If they will try the following plan, which by the by is not origi-

[1] Reprinted in Richmond *Southern Planter*, 7:7-8 (January, 1847).

nal, but has been used in days of "auld lang syne," "down in old Virginia," and proved to be a good thing, they need not be afraid of the expense.

Select a spot upon rising ground where the surface water will run off, and strike a circle 12 feet across and set a circle of strong stakes about 5 feet high and one foot apart—saw off the upper ends even and square—set another circle of stakes 4 feet distant all round, the same height, but they need not be quite so close to one another —leave a space on one side about two feet wide for a door way and set stakes or nail boards on each side so as to make a passage to the inside space—put strips across the inside space from the tops of the stakes, sufficiently strong to hold up a stack of hay.

Now take prairie hay, or some of the superabundant straw that all western farmers waste or burn up, "to get it out of the way," and tramp the space between the stakes full and as tight as possible, taking care to raise it a foot or two above the top of the stakes, then make a complete round stack that will shed water, tapered from the outside stakes to the centre. To make a ventilation, nail 4 boards about 5 or 6 inches wide together; let two of them be one foot the longest, and set this box up as a stack pole, and nail a cap on the top of the two long pieces. If this give too much ventilation stuff straw in one end. Hang two tight doors, made to shut upon woolen listing.

This "hay stack ice house," that any farmer can make in two days will keep ice two years. Of course the size may be varied. The ice should not be laid upon the ground, but upon some rails covered with straw—or a bed of straw would be better—a slight ditch should be dug around outside to drain off the water that drips down. With slight repairs it will last years.

Now, besides being a good ice house, it would make one of the cheapest and best winter store houses for turnips &c., convenient to the cattle yard, that can be contrived when the soil will not admit of making cellars under our

buildings. And in all damp climates, cellars under dwellings are a positive nuisance—complete hotbeds of pestilential miasma.

There is one more purpose for which the fabrick may be used. Cobbet, who deprecated the use of ice, in speaking of an ice house in his "Cottage Economy,"[1] says if you are tired of it for that use, it would make one of finest nests for young pigs in the winter, that could be contrived.

Now I do not entirely deprecate the use of ice; but I believe like all other good things it is often used to excess—and I certainly think that tea, coffee, and milk, are used too much in this country, to say nothing of that other thing that is so often used "to make the water taste better." Strange taste. And if we all drank more cold water and less "warm drink," our health would be decidedly better.

Therefore I think that a cheap plan to make water more palatable, must be advantageous in these cheap times.

SOLON ROBINSON

Lake C. H. Ia., Dec. 31, 1841.

TRAVELING MEMORANDA—NO. 8.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 9:50; Mar., 1842]

[January 15, 1842]

EDITORS OF CULTIVATOR—While in New Jersey I learned one fact that I was not aware of, but I am not certain but I may have mentioned it in my last letter, that the Peach tree which has heretofore afforded such a large income to the cultivators in this state, has almost entirely failed. This is a great loss to the people—for it seemed as though this tree flourished better than any other crop upon their light sands. It is impossible for those unacquainted with the fact, to conceive what an advantage the owners of such land have derived from marl.

[1] Cobbett, William, *Cottage Economy* . . . (London, 1826).

Some of the most valuable land opposite Philadelphia is that upon the "reclaimed meadows," from which the tide has been dyked out at great expense, and which requires great care and sometimes great expense to keep in repair. Mr. Benjamin Cooper, at Camden, informed me, that one break in his embankment, cost $500 to repair. I hope if there are any who may envy those who live in situations that seem better adapted than their own to make farming profitable, that they will bear in mind that the most favored locations are not always the most profitable, for there are a great many out-goes, that the small farmer of the interior would not only find burdensome, but ruinous. For instance, the cost of the fence and dykes on Mr. Cooper's farm, would buy an equal number of acres where I live, of better soil, and fence, plow and sow the whole to wheat, and put up comfortable farm buildings. If we could see and know more of one another, we should learn to be more contented and happy in our humble situations.

It was lamentable to witness the waste of land and wreck of fortunes around Philadelphia, which the Morus multicaulus mania produced. Patches of the trees are yet to be seen on many farms, but little that looks as though the owners ever intended to convert them into their only proper use, the feeding of silk worms.

Fifteen miles above Philadelphia, on the banks of the beautiful Delaware, I saw another great waste of wealth, in Mr. Biddle's[1] "great forcing house," [not the bank] where he boasts that he can produce grapes every month in the year. Such vast outlays of money upon such objects, are not so creditable to the owner as many of the small and almost unknown improvements in farming and farming implements that we find in every neighborhood. For instance, at Camden, I saw a new drill barrow, lately

[1] Nicholas Biddle, born January 8, 1786, at Philadelphia; died February 27, 1844. Litterateur, scholar, statesman, financier, and agriculturist. Had a fine estate called "Andalusia" on the Delaware. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 2:243-45.

patented by Mr. Jones,[1] which I consider preferable to any other that I have seen, and which will prove of more advantage to the cultivators of the soil, than all Mr. Biddle's acres of glass hot houses, although he can boast that he raised the finest grapes in the world. Again, the improvements that Mr. Edmund Morris of Burlington, has made in the manner of feeding silk worms, will be the means of producing more real wealth and happiness in the world, than all the "forcing houses" [banks included] in christendom. His manner of destroying the vitality of the worm in the cocoon is so simple and easy, that I am surprised that it is not universally adopted, as it must be known to most silk raisers. In the roof of his cocoonery he has a large window, enclosed by a small close room, in which the cocoons are placed, and the heat of the sun is so great as to kill the grub quite as effectually and with less trouble than baking in an oven.

Mr. Morris is one of those worthy friends of improvement that deserve to have their names kept before the readers of all agricultural papers. And the way that he knows how to welcome a friend, is the same that I have found in so many hundred instances during the summer of 1841, and which has tended so much to make me feel proud of

"My own native land."

Burlington is one of the most delightful towns in the United States—And reader, I beg you to remember why! Every house has its garden, and every street its shade trees. And now, as you hope to have your name remembered with a blessing by future generations, promise me that ere another summer sun comes, parching up the earth, that you will make one little green spot where you have planted at least one tree.

At Trenton, I saw, to me, a new kind of crop. Cayenne pepper is cultivated to considerable extent, and being

[1] Possibly this is the drill barrow of William Jones and H. C. Smith described and illustrated in the New York *American Agriculturist*, 5:276 (1846).

dried is ground in a common grist mill, put up in barrels, and brings about 20 cts. a pound. The grinding costs one ct. a pound. Even at the present low price, it is found a very profitable crop, easily cultivated, and will grow upon any rich soil.

From Trenton to New-York, I had a night ride over that much traveled rail-road, as my anxiety to be at the State Fair at Syracuse compelled me to push forward, leaving many of the beauties of New Jersey unseen; but as a Sunday intervened, I took that only opportunity to visit a most delightful spot, and met with a most hearty welcome from that excellent friend of agricultural improvement, Mr. Charles Downing[1] of Newburgh. A beautiful work upon Landscape Gardening, lately published by his brother A. J. Downing,[2] has rendered the name familiar to the lovers of rural scenery in this country. I had not the pleasure of meeting the author, but from what I saw of his excellent nursery, and tasteful mansion, I was satisfied that he was such a man of taste as would confer lasting benefits to the country, if he and those like him would write much more for the gratification and information of their fellow citizens. From my acquaintance with Mr. Chas. Downing, I am confident that those who desire to order trees from his well filled nursery, will be well satisfied to be assured of finding him a gentleman of integrity, and that they will find the trees exactly as he recommends them, which is a small matter of information that may be useful to some of your readers, and one that I hope the lovers of good fruit may profit by.

[1] Charles Downing, born July 9, 1802, at Newburgh, New York; died January 18, 1885. Pomologist, horticulturist, and author. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 5:418-19.

[2] Andrew Jackson Downing, born October 30, 1815, at Newburgh; died July 28, 1852. Landscape gardener, architect, horticulturist, agricultural editor and writer. Downing's *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*, went through many editions. *Op. cit.*, 5:417-18.

In passing along the North River, the eye of the lover of delightful country residences, meets with constant pleasure.

It ought to convince us of the folly of crowding our sons into "a genteel situation" in a city, to see such a large portion of them make a wreck of all happiness, and sink in poverty into an early grave, while the few whom fortune favors with the mass of wealth that would not suffice the mass of citizens if equally distributed, are to be found escaping from the city and spending their wealth in ornamenting the banks of this beautiful river; thus proving that in looking for real social enjoyment of life, the country is ever preferable to the city. There is much food for reflection and profitable application in that trite old proverb, that,

"Man made the town, but God made the country;"

and those that love Him, ought to love to cultivate, improve and beautify the works of his creation, and to be more happy and contented amid the georgeous beauties of nature, than in the artificial atmosphere of a crowded city.

And now, Mr. Tucker, I come to the time when I first had the pleasure of meeting you face to face, although we had long been acquainted—and although it may not be particularly interesting to you, it may to some other of those acquaintances of mine who I am in the monthly practice of meeting in your columns, to describe some of the things with which you are already familiar.

I will therefore address myself to them—I landed at Albany, upon one of those delightful days in the last of September, for which the autumn of our country is so justly celebrated, for affording the most beautiful weather imaginable.

After depositing my baggage, (and here let me observe that I am one of those old fashioned men who do not scruple to "carry my own bundle,") and reading a few letters from that place which I am never able to for-

get, and which every man that has "a home" should ever remember, I undertook to find some one in this strange place that was not altogether a stranger to me, although I was personally unknown to all. It was no easy matter, for all my agricultural friends seemed to be actively engaged in busy preparation for the approaching carnival at Syracuse. Mr. Tucker had took himself off from his office, and was as busy among bulls and boars, and horses, hogs, sheep and cows, superintending their embarkation on board the rail-road cars, as though to that vocation he had been "well bred." After seeing "all right" for an early start the next morning, I soon found myself quite at home in his house, where we were soon joined by Mr. Bement, and at peep of day were seated in a cab ordered over night to take us out to the rail-road at the top of the inclined plane, a mile or more from the city; for be it known that the Albanians have not the most convenient rail-road arrangements in the world.

Our trip to Syracuse was a proud one—twenty-four cars loaded with stock, and to which was attached a passenger car occupied by Messrs. Tucker, E. P. Prentice,[1] Van Bergen,[2] Bement, Chapin,[3] and several other gentlemen who owned the stock, or were interested in some way—the day very pleasant, and the novelty of such a train exciting more interest and attention than perhaps ever was bestowed upon any train that ever passed over the route, and our company all being in a high flow of

[1] Ezra P. Prentice, of Mount Hope, near Albany, breeder of livestock. President, New York State Agricultural Society, 1850. See description of his farm in *Cultivator*, n. s., 2:43-44 (February, 1845). An engraving of the residence faces page 41.

[2] Judge Anthony Van Bergen, Coxsackie, New York. President, Greene County Agricultural Society, 1840. One of the best farmers on the Hudson, according to the *Cultivator*, 8:176 (November, 1841). Vice-president, New York State Agricultural Society, 1843.

[3] Heman Chapin, East Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York. Livestock breeder. Active in New York State Agricultural Society.

spirits, without being excited by ardent spirits, all tended to make the trip one to be long remembered.

Another fact that should be remembered is, that the rail-road companies between Schenectady and Utica, and between Utica and Syracuse had tendered the use of the roads to the State Society, and all the agents and conductors seemed to evince a most laudable zeal in getting their unusual fare safely through. I am satisfied that this praiseworthy effort of those gentlemen of Albany and vicinity, who exerted themselves so much in getting up this show, will tend much to wake up the sleeping energies of the country, to the importance and benefit of paying more attention to agricultural fairs.

Of the proceedings of the fair, it is not necessary to speak, as that has already been published, but the reception that I met with there was such as to convince me that the labor of those who devote themselves to encourage their brethren in the spirit of agricultural improvement, will be sure to meet with an ample reward from them whenever they have an opportunity to show their respect.

One of the marks of respect of which I feel justly proud, was one of the most elegant pitchforks that ever I saw, and which has been universally admired by the thousands who have seen it, that was presented to me by and in the name of the State Agricultural Society of New York, by H. S. Randall, esq.,[1] Cor. Sec'y of the Society, of Cortland Co., where it was manufactured, by Mr. Lewis Sanford. I also was presented with one of Barnaby & Moore's premium side hill plows, which has also been much admired by all who have seen it since it has been in my possession. I was also presented with another premium plow, but as I failed to receive it before I left Buffalo, I will take another occasion to speak of it when

[1] Henry Stephens Randall, born May 3, 1811, Brookfield, Madison County, New York; died August 14, 1876, Cortland. Agriculturist, educator, author, authority on sheep. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 15:347-48.

it arrives. The Side Hill Plow is already described in the Cultivator,[1] and I have no doubt will supersede all other plows for that purpose; this one also working admirably in all kinds of plowing.

Although some appeared to be disappointed in the quantity of Stock that was exhibited, I think that, considering this was the first effort of the State Society, all ought to be well satisfied, as the great object was gained in the strong interest manifested among ten thousand people who were present. No doubt that another year will produce one of the greatest fairs ever had in this country, if the same enthusiastic spirit then manifested continues to exhilarate the mass of New York farmers, of which you may well be proud, for I fully believe that no section of our country can make a display of such a mass as was seen at Syracuse, of more respectable "well-to-do-in-the-world" looking people.

There are a great many small matters that I might dwell upon, and which would prove interesting, but I find myself getting over the ground so slowly, that I must needs pass them over for the present, and again take my seat in the car attached to the great stock train, upon the evening of the first day of October, spending a very cool night upon the road, and arriving in Albany for breakfast, on my way to Boston.

Although time and space are almost overcome by railroad facilities between distant places, yet now time and space forbid me from giving a description of Mr. Prentice's farm near Albany, and the beautiful stocks of Short Horns and South Down Sheep, which I saw there; but I will assure my readers that if they wish to purchase they will find Mr. P. a gentleman whose word may be depended on, and his stock exactly what he may recommend.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., Jan. 15, 1842.

[1] See *Cultivator*, 8:176 (November, 1841), Barnaby and Mooer's side hill plow.

For the Western Farmer's "Own Paper."

ODDS AND ENDS—*By an Oddity.*

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:24; Mar., 1842]

[January 22, 1842]

If we should pick up all the useful odds and ends that we meet with among the *un*published items of our life, we might often publish a useful chapter. But whether useful or not, you are welcome to a few of such *odds* as happen to occur to my mind at present, and I hope that some of your readers will find them useful to their *ends*.

Farming tools.—What a miserable policy it is to buy the lowest priced articles, for they are not the cheapest, and yet it seems to prevail to an almost universal extent.

I can find hundreds of plows now among farmers in this section of country, that are scarcely superior to the ancient Egyptian plow, formed of a crooked stick of wood.

A few years since, a cargo of rakes were brought to Chicago from Ohio, "fair to look upon," and withal *cheap*, that for all practical purposes were not worth the cost of freight.

Pitchforks that are now most commonly found for sale, are only worthy the name of a brittle stick, with a brittle piece of iron stuck in one end of it. The "last sad remains" of thousands of them can now be found upon the premises of those who have mourned over their early decay, instead of mourning over their own folly at purchasing the *cheap* articles, instead of paying their own village smith for a real good article, and thereby encouraging "domestic manufactures."

And here let me recommend your Society to offer premiums for all kinds of "home-made" farming tools.

Matches.—I don't mean to make the girls blush at the idea that I am going to offer them some sage recommendations upon this subject, though I cannot help remarking that I think it would be well for them to pay a little more attention to this matter, and if some of them would

"pay attention" to the editor of this paper, it might relieve him from his own native modesty that prevents him from paying attention to them upon the subject of a match, instead of matches in general. My present recommendation is to every housekeeper to keep matches, of which there are three sorts, all of which are articles of household economy. The friction match, which can be bought cheaper than made in small quantities, often saves the cost a thousand fold in one day, by doing away the necessity of "keeping fire." When in N.Y. last summer, boys were hawking them through the streets of an excellent quality, "7 boxes for sixpence." If any of my readers are troubled with one of those pests of a neighborhood, the race of which is not yet extinct, I advise them to procure a quantity of those cheap matches, and give a box to every customer that comes "to borrow a little fire," which, like most of the race of borrowers, they never intend to pay. In fact you may consider yourself extremely lucky if you get rid of the nuisance without a coal dropt upon the floor, or perhaps carpet, by which you are damaged to the amount of not only seven boxes of matches, but 7 times 7. As it is useless to recommend one of those habitual fire-borrowers to expend a whole cent in the purchase of a box of matches, I repeat the advice to furnish them gratuitously.

Then there are brimstone matches, made of pine splinters, or little strips of paper, having one end dipt in melted brimstone, and which any child of ten years old can make enough in one evening to last a family ten months, I consider as an almost indispensible article among the comforts of housekeeping. Whenever I see a person puffing away a vast amount of breath and patience in an almost vain endeavor to light a candle with a coal, I wonder whether that person is a great admirer of "labor-saving machinery." If not, I am sure that the labor-saving of a little brimstone match, the cost of which is so small that it cannot be enumerated, would be a sufficient argument.

And finally, about those paper matches, I shall illustrate in my own way. "Now I du wonder what them 'ere little bits of twisted paper are for, that I always see stuck up in a tumbler on Mrs. R.'s mantle shelf." "Well now, I can't say exactly, but I guess as how they're jist for ornament, for you see a whole parcel of shells there too, not a bit of use in the world." "Why now you're both wrong. I was just as much puzzled as you till I was there t'other night, when I went to snuff the candle with them awkward iron things, and not being used to 'em I put it out. So I went to work to light it, and all I could do I could hardly get a coal out of that plaguey stove, and I do wonder what folks keep stoves for, the pesky things. So after I had e'en-a-most burnt myself up, and almost melted away the candle, and dropt a right smart chance of grease, one of the little girls came in, and dear me, says she. Mrs. Blowhard, says she, why did'nt you take a match; and with that she whip'd out one of them little twisted papers, and would you believe it, she lighted the candle in less than no time. And so you see, that's jist what they are for, and I declare now if they an't the handiest things I ever did see, and I have told my old man that he must take a newspaper, if for nothing else they'll be so nice to make matches of."

Facts are stubborn things, but not half so stubborn as those who persist in burning their fingers at the "pesky stove," and their noses over a coal, and their temper over the "right smart chance of grease spots," when it would be so easy to have a few little twisted pieces of paper stuck in a tumbler on the mantle shelf, notwithstanding Mrs. Blowhard and her gossips might think they were "more for ornament than use."

These are small matters, you may say, but recollect that the comforts of life are made up of small matters.

SOLON ROBINSON.[1]

(To be continued)

[1] The editor added the following "Note.—We disclaim the authorship of the heading of this communication, Mr. R.'s 'oddity,' it

A New Source of Wealth
for the prairie farmer.
$100,000 of "British Gold"
ready to be distributed in the west for
100,000 Bushels Timothy Seed.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:37; Apr., 1842]

[February 27, 1842]

Mr. Editor—I have received letters from one of the largest agricultural ware houses in the Eastern cities, in which the proprietors state that they are ready to contract for any quantity of timothy seed that can be purchased at Chicago, at one dollar a bushel.

Is it not worth the attention of farmers? I do not believe there can be any better crop raised, and if they will make early preparation, they can soon supply the world, and the crop requires a comparative small amount of labor, I should like to make arrangements to buy twenty thousand bushels next fall at Chicago. Can I do it? Who says yes? We want the money to put in circulation. And it will add permanent wealth to the country.

Yours, &c.

Solon Robinson.

Lake C. H. Ia. Feb. 27, 1842.

seems to us, consists in his devotion to the advancement of agriculture, and in this he is unquestionably odd. Would there were more such 'oddities!'

"Mr. R.'s remarks to the ladies under the head of 'matches,' should receive their attention, particularly that part where he alludes to their writing for the paper. This silence cannot be owing to their not being requested to write, as Mr. R. suggests, for in every No. or two, a request has been addressed to them particularly."

The remainder of the article was published in the *Union Agriculturist*, 2:35 (April, 1842). It dealt with hedging, ditching, blue grass, etc.

The Penitentiary System of the U. States.

[Nashville *Agriculturist*, 3:67; Mar., 1842]

[March ?, 1842]

To the Editors of the Tennessee State Agriculturist:[1]

Gentlemen:—Neither you nor your readers should turn away from the caption of this article, under the impression that it is not an Agricultural subject, and therefore inappropriate to your pages, or because it comes from one without the borders of Tennessee, and to you and your readers a stranger.

My present ideas are awakened by the remarks of Mr. Kezer[2] in your January No., where he calls attention to the fact of the State "collecting all the rascals, thieves, villains and murderers, that come within our borders;" (he should have added, provided they do not escape the penalty of the law, through the influence of money, and subtle technicalities of a Statute that is as a sealed book to the common class of community,) "placing them in a large manufactory, supported in part by the very taxes wrung from honest labor."

If the latter part of this assertion is true in regard to Tennessee, it is not in many other States, for there, the whole object, end and aim, of the penitentiary system,

[1] The *Agriculturist* was begun in 1840 and continued until August 1, 1846. Tolbert Fanning, editor, 1840-1844, was interested in agricultural advancement and imported some of the best breeds of stock. In 1843 he opened an agricultural school on his farm near Nashville which was the forerunner of Franklin College, chartered in 1844. Among contributors to the *Agriculturist* were Dr. John Shelby, for whom Shelby Medical College was named, and Dr. Gerard Troost, a native of Holland, who spent a year at New Harmony before going to Nashville in 1827. He was professor of chemistry and geology at the University of Nashville, 1828-1850. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 6:268-69; Clayton, W. W., *History of Davidson County, Tennessee . . .*, 231, 285 (Philadelphia, 1880); *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, 2d series, 3:3-19.

[2] T. Kezer, Esq., president of the Nashville, Tennessee, Mechanics' Association. A practical mechanic interested in lecturing and raising the standard of regard for mechanics as a profession.

seems to be, not the punishment or reform of the convicts, but how much money the State can make out of them.

Whether this great error arises out of the pernicious dispositions of our nature, or out of a mistaken notion what constitutes punishment, I cannot say—but it certainly appears as though the whole penitentiary system of the Union, was based upon this abominable idea, *that labor is punishment.* Great God of nature! Can this be true—No, it is as false, as those legislators are false to the true interests of the great body of laborers whose rights are sacrificed by bringing the labor of thieves, villains and murderers into competition with the honest mechanic, by sentencing convicts to "the *punishment* of hard labor" in our State prisons. Punishment indeed! Go to these convicts and ask them if labor is a punishment—they will tell you that they look upon the privilege of coming forth from their gloomy cells to labor in the cheering light of day, as one of the greatest blessings.

I have visited many penitentiaries in my day, and I always have found the convicts well fed, well clothed, well lodged, and cheerfully performing their labor, and in fact better off than I have often found honest industry outside the walls. It is a common thing in some States, to farm out these convict laborers, to contractors who will pay the greatest *bonus* to the State Treasury, thereby bringing convict labor in direct competition with the free mechanic.

What is the remedy, do you ask? Plain and clear as the light of day. Blot out of your statute book that cursed slander upon a great majority of the laborers of this country, that labor is a punishment. Cast out from the yard and work-shops of your penitentiaries, every manufacturing implement, and sentence your convicts to that most terrible punishment that all dread, *a life of idleness,* solitary and alone, without a single musical sound of the mechanic, or the human voice, where they would never be cheered with the sight of their fellows in iniquity, and

depend upon it villains would then be *punished*, and dread your State prisons, which as now conducted should be rather called State asylums. Then tax the honest, laboring part of the community to pay for *punishing* criminals, and my word for it they will pay the tax more cheerfully than they now look upon this system of abominable State monopoly, and convict competition with all the mechanical trades.

Depraved indeed must be that mind, and anti-American that heart, that could wish to see the present system entailed upon us, merely because a few dollars were brought directly into the State treasury, by the labor of convicts, when if the whole field was thrown open to the competition of *unpunished* labor, the great body politic would be made ten times richer, and the guilty would be really punished.

Gentlemen of the Nashville Mechanic's Association, friends and brothers! You have opened a battery upon this worst of all monopolies that afflicts and disgraces our common country, and degrades the honest artizan below the level of "a penitentiary gentleman boarder;" and I beseech you never to spike your guns or pull down your flag of justice, till you have driven every felon to his solitary cell, and cast out the "legion of devils," in the shape of mechanical implements, in the great State manufactory, where criminals are *punished* with labor, and you are disgraced by being placed in competition with "villains, thieves and murderers." [1]

Let your watchword be, "We *can*, we MUST, we WILL, elevate our character and standing in society," and you shall not lack, at least one volunteer, while the ability to wield a pen remains with your humble servant and friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court House, Ind., March 1842.

[1] For comment on this article see the *Agriculturist*, 3:136-37, 157-58 (June, July, 1842).

Household Department

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:30; Mar., 1842]

[March ?, 1842]

Coffee.—If you would have it good, roast it in a covered vessel, or in the oven of a stove, but don't burn it.—The grains should never be black.

Keeping Hams.—This is one of the easiest arts in housekeeping, and yet I hear of no one complaint more than this. "How *do* you keep your hams?" is an every day question. Perhaps the easiest and cheapest way is the one which I have last adopted. Take common cotton sheeting and make a bag large enough for the ham to slip in quite loose, put it in when well smoked, and before the meat bug makes its appearance in the spring—tie the mouth of the bag around the string of the ham, so that it will hang by that, while the bag hangs loose around it—hang them up in a cool dry room, and you can have as good bacon as I have 18 months old, without a worm, or the least waste, and scarcely any trouble, and the bags will answer a good purpose year after year.

Solon Robinson.

Notes upon Articles in the Feb'y No.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 9:85; May, 1842]

[May ?, 1842]

Styptic.—One of the most efficacious that I ever tried is common gun powder, reduced to a very fine powder and applied to the wound. The ingredients composing that article appear to be in the proper combination to have a speedy and good effect. It is better than puff ball, and more easily procured at all times. I have known it applied so as to reach a deep wound, (the cavity where a tooth had been drawn for instance,) with the best effect, by putting a little of it in a quill and forcing it into the wound by blowing.

MAKING PORK.—Mr. Cornell,[1] (page 33,) says he cannot make pork at $3.50 per cwt., with corn at 50 cents, potatoes 20 cents. But if all should cease making pork under these circumstances, pork would rise and corn would fall. What is the remedy? for we want to know out here in the West, being in just such "a fix." The price of pork at Chicago this winter has been from $1 to $2.25. A great portion of the hogs being of the landpike variety, being great consumers and small porkers, I do not think they have averaged more than $1.50 per cwt. Corn in the same market, 60 pounds to the bushel, 25 cents. Oats, 18. Potatoes, I cannot say what at Chicago; but here, 40 miles from there, plenty at 12½ cents; and corn, 16 cents; oats, 14 cents. Now at these prices, I am confident that every man who has put his grain inside of these long legged, lantern jawed swine, has lost money. But—and here I am "stalled." If it had not been for this immense "waste of grain," could it have been sold, even at these prices? It certainly does appear to me that it would be a beneficial remedy to have a better breed of hogs more generally diffused through the country.

And I too am certain that we never shall be wiser by reading of such experiments as Mr. Cornell alludes to; but we should be wiser if several gentlemen would take a lot of pigs and measure and count the cost of every article of food from weaning till butchering time, and give the result to the public, as to the breed, age, cost, weight, &c.

I suggest to agricultural societies to offer premiums for such detailed experiments. It would be far more beneficial than it would be to publish to the world that Mr. Prentice owned the best bull or the best boar at the fair, while at the same time everybody knew that Mr.

[1] Ezra Cornell, Ithaca, New York; born January 11, 1807; died December 9, 1874. Capitalist. Founder of Cornell University. Interested in agriculture. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 4:444-46.

Stay-at-home had a much better one that was not there, and consequently could not get the premium. Let the premiums be—not for the biggest bull, for if that was not a bull, it would be a boar; but let them be for those who produced the most beneficial and useful examples for their fellow citizens to follow. In this way we would soon learn how many bushels of corn it took to make a hundred of pork, instead of hearing how much more an old sow weighed after she had drunk a bucket of swill than she did before. We want more facts and less puffing.

"A Stone Scraper."—When I was a boy and lived in stony Connecticut, I used to have the back ache and sore fingers, "picking up stones." And as it was always considered an "endless job," I suppose they are not all picked up yet, particularly as there was when I left them a great many small ones; and since then, I have seen a great many small men grow into large ones, (in their own opinion.) I don't know but some of those small stones have grown large enough to be operated upon by that stone scraper described by Mr. Bowman,[1] (page 34;) and for the benefit of some of those Yankee boys' backs and fingers, to say nothing about the sythes and consequent grindstone turning, I want some of them to try that scraper, and see if it will answer to pick up stones with; because if it does, I know my name will be blest by the rising Yankee generation for making the suggestion for their especial benefit. I would try it myself; but as a matter of geological information to those same Yankee boys, I will inform them that out here on the prairie, they could'nt find pebble stone enough on a thousand acres to make a "right smart chance of a sizeable sort of a stone heap."

"Cream Pot Cattle."—It is with feelings far from being allied to pleasure that I read the result of the sale of this stock of cattle in friend Bement's letter, (page 36.) Hundreds of far less valuable cattle have been im-

[1] James L. Bowman, Brownsville, Pennsylvania.

ported at great expense. "Far fetched and dear bought," is all the recommendation required by some. Alas, for my worthy old friend, Colonel Jaques;[1] his stock was "domestic manufacture;" and who would purchase that in these anti-tariff times? I knew the colonel was embarrassed, and I deeply regret to hear that he has been sacrificed too. His efforts to do good were worthy a better fate. I am at this time in good health, and as comfortable as could be expected, in one of the muddiest winters that you ever saw. If I do not get stuck fast, you will again hear from SOLON ROBINSON.

LETTER FROM SOLON ROBINSON.

[Extract; Albany *Cultivator*, 9:117; July, 1842]

[June 8, 1842]

"I have received several letters, enquiring why I have discontinued my correspondence to the Cultivator. I assure you that it is not in consequence of any disinclination on my part. I am as anxious to gratify those of my friends, who are pleased to read my communications, as they can be to read them; but a great pressure of business has wholly prevented me during this spring. I have been so hard at work that I have been obliged to forego the pleasure that I always feel when engaged in contributing my share of instruction or amusement to my fellow laborers.

But I assure you, and you may assure your readers if you see proper, that the time is not far distant when, I hope, many of your readers will be pleased to see again the familiar name of their old friend

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., June 8, 1842.

[1] Colonel Samuel Jaques, Ten Hills Stock Farm, Charlestown, Massachusetts. Bement commented with considerable irritation on the small attendance and low prices at the Colonel's sale.

Solon Robinson to Incog, about Hedging.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:67; Aug., 1842]

[June 30, 1842]

Dear Sir—I have long intended to make some reply to Incog upon his remarks in the May No., accusing me of inconsistency about hedging, &c.,[1] but circumstances have till now prevented.

I do not wish to discourage any one from trying experiments in hedging. I have no doubt that something will yet be found to answer; but, after witnessing so many failures with the thorn, why should I continue to believe that they will prove otherwise on the prairie? I grant there are several kinds that flourish wild in our country, but will they flourish when trained in a hedge? I have not tried them: who has? I still repeat, "that all attempts at fencing, with sods or banks of earth, in such a loose friable soil, is buying wit too dear." But I still believe that a ditch can be made so as to form a good fence, and not very expensive. So can a fence be made by embankment, when the ground is well set in *blue grass*.—This I have tried. For my own part, I cannot see the 'discrepancy' in the two articles, written at different dates, which Mr. Incog sees. Neither have I changed my views in regard to fencing since I first settled upon the prairie, except to deprecate the use of *sods*, and doubt the success of thorn hedges. 'The grounds of my advice' have been already given; and, for still stronger grounds, I beg to refer Incog to the article of 'Commentator,' page 78, of the last May No. of the Cultivator, the author of which I happen to know to be a man that never puts forth opinions at random.

There is another view that I have about fencing which I have often expressed, and now do so again; and I venture to say that Incog, unless he really belongs to the family of the Incogatives, will not attempt to deny. It

[1] Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:44. Incog was the title under which M. L. Knapp wrote for each issue of the *Agriculturist* a review of the preceding number. See *post*, 363 n.

is this: The time will come when all those 'millions of acres of land, sustaining no material for fences,' will be cultivated, and that, too, without fencing.

The present generation may 'maul and haul' rails to their heart's content, and perhaps the next generation will follow in the footsteps of their fathers; but the time *will* come when the grand prairie of Illinois will be brought under the dominion of the husbandmen, without the aid of fence. I assert it now, as my sincere belief, that, if a law having that object in view were to be now enacted, it would ultimately prove of more benefit to the state than would a present of ten millions of dollars. And I believe, Mr. Editor, that this is one of the most important questions that can be discussed in your columns, and I hope the opponents of the 'no-fence system' will pick up the gauntlet that I now throw down,[1] and if I cannot sustain my side of the question, why—I will ask you to help me.

I remain yours, &c.,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., June 30, 1842.

LA PORTE CO., &C.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:68; Aug., 1842]

[July 12, 1842]

DEAR SIR—Since I returned from our late pleasant tour through a portion of your state,[2] I have visited La

[1] The challenge was taken up in the February number of the *Prairie Farmer*. See *post*, 363-66.

[2] On June 14, Robinson and John S. Wright, editor of the *Union Agriculturist*, arranged for a tour of several days through the northeastern Illinois counties in the interests of the *Agriculturist* and the Union Agricultural Society of that region. Meetings were held at Naperville, Aurora, Elgin, Coral, and Crystal Lake. Where sufficient notice had been given, good crowds assembled to listen to Robinson's addresses, and numerous subscriptions were secured for the *Agriculturist*. Among the more prominent of Robinson's listeners were "S. Johnston," probably Spencer Johnson, a well-known grain and dairy farmer, a New Yorker by birth, who

Porte co. There is a very good feeling pervading the farming community there, that will produce a very fine fair next October.

There was considerable alarm existing among the wheat growers during the first week of this month, on account of a slight show of rust; but I think it will not injure the crop. I believe early sowing is the best remedy to prevent this terrible scourge of the farmers in this country.

The army worm did considerable damage in La Porte co. this season. Many fields of timothy were entirely destroyed, and some fields of corn swept clean.

I visited your friend, John I. Crandall, and found a very pretty daughter of his engaged in feeding a lot of silk worms. They feed from the common white mulberry. It is much more hardy than the morus multicaulis, and furnishes foliage earlier in the season.—Mr. Crandall has a very large quantity of the trees, and could furnish many other persons with a stock.

Those farmers in La Porte who used the locomotive threshing machine last year, are much pleased with it. This machine passes through the field, thrashing as it goes along among the shocks, and scatters the straw over the ground. If this straw is then plowed in, it will undoubtedly be of great advantage to the soil.

I also saw a new kind of fanning mill building at La Porte, upon an entirely new plan, that appears to me

had moved to Kane County in 1837 (*Commemorative Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois*, 775 [Beers, Leggett & Co., Chicago, 1888]); James T. Gifford, of Kane County, president of the Union Agricultural Society, and contributor to the *Prairie Farmer*, Albany *Cultivator*, and other periodicals; and Edward W. Brewster, later an officer of the Union Agricultural Society, and at the time, postmaster of Little Woods, Kane County.

In reporting the tour, Wright said that traveling with Robinson made money "a needless commodity," that his talks were "all of the right character, plain and practical and no two alike," and that he would like to print extracts of them if Robinson would write them out. Apparently Robinson failed to do this. For Wright's report, see *Union Agriculturist*, 2:61 (July, 1842).

will prove a very valuable improvement. These mills are only about half the size and price of the old-fashioned kind.

There is an improving disposition in La Porte to raise more wool and flax, and to encourage domestic manufactures. This is all-important; for, at present, the whole county is so dependent upon the wheat crop, that a failure of that brings ruin in its train, and they have no resources to fall back upon. It is now about ten years since this county began to settle. Some of the oldest farms already begin to show considerable fruit.

At a meeting of the friends of the agricultural society, July 4, I accepted an invitation to attend their fair in October; and a resolution was passed to give you a special invitation, which I hope you will accept, together with a large delegation from Illinois, who would meet with a hearty welcome among the warm hearts of La Porte.

Nothing is better calculated to promote good feeling between different sections of the country than an interchange of visits during the season of agricultural fairs.

The shades of evening admonish me to make this rambling epistle no longer.

Yours, friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., July 12, '42.

A PRESENT OF PEACHES.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:83; Oct., 1842]

[August, 1842]

MR. EDITOR: Herewith you will receive a small compliment, in the shape of a little box of peaches, from my garden; not that I suppose peaches will be any rarity to you, but I wish to offer the strongest possible argument in favor of growing this fruit in this section of country. I regret that I had not an apportunity to send some a week or ten days past, as the specimen would have been far superior; the best of my fruit having ripened earliest, is all gone. However, such fruit as I now send, is cer-

tainly worth *cultivating*. Let me repeat the word, *cultivating*, with an emphasis; for it is a most miserable and fatal error to suppose that peach trees can be stuck down in any by-place, and produce good fruit without cultivation, in this latitude.

There is another fact worth noticing in this fruit: the trees are all seedlings. I know of some who have neglected to set out trees, because they said it was of no use to set them until they could get grafts.

The trees are five years old. As to my way of cultivating them, I do not think it necessary to intrude upon the notice of others, unless they request it.

I have, of necessity, been obliged to send those I have to you while hard, and of course you will not get them in that perfection that you would to take them mellow from the trees. But, if you will give me a call in the tourse of the present week, I will give you such a feast of sugared peaches and rich sweet cream, as you cannot get in such perfection at any other place within forty miles of Chicago.

I doubt whether I shall be able to make a trip, as talked of, in Illinois, before the Fair. But of that, more anon. Your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., August, 1842.

FENCE, OR NO FENCE?

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:84; Oct., 1842]

[August, 1842]

MR. EDITOR: The following very important decision has been made by the Supreme Court of New Jersey, in an action that was brought to recover damage committed by cattle suffered to run at large, without being under the charge of a keeper. I have no doubt but that the same rule of laws is as applicable in Illinois and Indiana as in New Jersey; and if enforced, it would make a very material point in favor of the advocates of cultivating

land without fences, while we confine the stock within enclosures.

It seems in the New Jersey case, the defendant plead that he was not liable for damage, because the plaintiff had not a 'lawful fence' along the highway, when the cattle broke in. But the court decided that the 'act to regulate fences extends only to owners of adjoining closes.'

2d. '*Owners of land are not bound to erect statute fences* along the highways running through their lands to protect themselves against trespasses committed by cattle suffered to run at large, and pastured upon the public-roads.'

And the reasoning of the court is as sound as the decision. For they say, 'Why should a landlord be subjected (after it may be) to the onerous expense of putting up a lawful fence to protect himself against the cattle of a man living at a distance from him, whose land (if he have any) does not join him; and who, instead of keeping his cattle upon his own close, chooses to pasture them upon the highway, to the great annoyance of all his neighbors and every traveler. [Not even excepting the traveler upon railroads, where cattle are not only a very great annoyance, but often endanger the lives of passengers.] Between such landholder and the owners of cattle running at large, there should be no mutuality in requiring the former to surround his lands by such a fence as the statute deems a lawful one between adjoining owners.'

Now, this I call as sound legal doctrine as ever emanated from a *court of justice.* For it is not justice that a whole neighborhood should be compelled by law to fence against all the unruly bulls that you, in a spirit of spite and ill-will, might see proper to turn out upon the common. But I am willing to meet the advocates of free suffrage to every four-footed beast and unclean goose, upon the halfway ground; that is, upon a half fence. I am willing to build a fence that will keep well-bred neat

cattle on the right side, (or, rather, on the wrong side,) if that portion of community who are on the wrong side of this question will only keep in confinement their small stock.

But enough of this now. I earnestly entreat the farmers of Northern Illinois to attend the Fair at Aurora, on the 19th and 20th of October, and then, among other things, we will have a 'big talk' upon this question.

I remain, a strong advocate of the system of cultivating the prairie without fence, and your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., August, 1842.

"SHEEP ON THE WESTERN PRAIRIES."

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 1:237-38; Nov., 1842]

[September, 1842]

GENT.—The article in your September No. under the above title,[1] was the first one read by me, and it is of so much importance not only to the West but to the East also, that I wish to corroborate the statements of Mr. Murray, and add some of my own.

Sheep can now be purchased for even less than the price he names.[2] The distance to drive, which is of some importance to a person who would like to look into the business, would be from 100 to 200 miles, and the best time to drive, directly after shearing, or about the middle of September.

There are hundreds of situations where a man might keep a thousand or two head of sheep for many years, without buying more than 40 acres of land, costing $50; and this merely for a home for the flock, as "Uncle Sam," the greatest landholder in the world, has no objection to our pasturing his big prairies. There are sundry such

[1] The article summarized a communication from James Murray, of Buffalo, on the subject of his sheep farm in La Salle County, Illinois. *American Agriculturist*, 1:176-78.

[2] Murray had purchased 1700 head of sheep in Ohio and Indiana at 75 cents to $1.00 a head.

capital situations in this county, only 40 miles from Chicago. The cost of stocking such a business would be about thus:—

Forty acres of land,	$50
A comfortable log cabin, two rooms,	50
A fence, ten rails high, around the land, (which will keep out prairie wolves,) 6,400 rails—3,600 rails for yards, &c. making 10,000, delivered in fence,	100
A small stable for cow and horse,	25
Another small building for storehouse, &c.	25
A well of first rate water and pump,	30
1,000 sheep, delivered on the spot, at $1 each,	1,000

Any quantity of hay required at $1,50 a ton, delivered in the stack, and oats at 12½ cts. a bushel, or corn 16 cents. Board and wages about the same as mentioned by Mr. Murray,[1] though I think that item would be a trifle lower, say $10 a month for wages, and board in a family on the premises would not cost over $1 a week. The item of salt costs $1,25 to $1,50 a barrel in Chicago, and 50 cents transportation: hauling the wool to Chicago 25 cts. a hundred pounds.

No doubt about the hogs destroying the snakes—if they do not eat them, as some doubt, they certainly eat the eggs. You give a wrong impression to those not well versed in the subject, when you say "land can be had for *government price,* say $1,25 to $4 an acre*" &c. Government land is always $1,25 an acre. Improved land can be bought of individuals from 3 to 10 dollars an acre, according to location and value of improvements; often it can be had for less than the improvements cost; such is the condition of those now in debt.

*$4, was intended to express the price of *improved* land, which would save several of the items of building and fencing enumerated above.—Ed's.

[1] Murray estimated the cost of board and wages of a shepherd at $16 a month.

The natural grass of the prairie it is no wonder that Mr. Murray prefers, because it is, either green or dry, better for sheep than the best of timothy, and the sheep also prefer it. There are a great many weeds which they are very fond of. His plan of seeding prairies is a good one.[1] The picket fence mentioned, though not a very expensive one, is not necessary.

The cost of breaking prairie, although it seems low, is nevertheless not so low by 25 cents an acre as it can be done in this county. If I was going to cultivate prairie for sheep, I should sow a good deal of rye for winter pasture, and save a great deal of hay.

If I was breaking sod in June and July for wheat, I would plow five inches deep and no matter how wide, say 20 or 24 inches, and be careful to lay every furrow flat over; this gives a good quantity of loose earth to harrow in the wheat upon, and by the next spring after the wheat comes off, it will plow up tolerably easy, though not mellow; it will take two years to rot.

If I was plowing in August to plant in the spring on the sod with corn, 2 1-2 or 3 inches would do well; the sod will rot sooner than when plowed deeper. If I was plowing in the spring to sow oats on the sod, I would plow 3 1-2 or 4 inches deep. The furrow slice should always be turned completely bottom up, and lay until rotten enough to harrow to pieces when plowed again, let that be longer or shorter, which will depend a good deal on the time of year it was broken. You must understand that a "sod crop of corn" is planted by dropping the seed in the furrow or by cutting holes in the sod to drop the seed in, and that it cannot be cultivated, as the top of the sod is as dry and hard as a side of sole leather.

On a sheep farm I should not adopt Mr. Murray's four course system. My plan would be to sow rye or oats

[1] Murray suggested first the gradual burning of the wild grass, beginning in June. White and red clover, redtop, timothy, or bluegrass seed were then to be sown, and after a shower, sheep driven over the field to trample in the seed.

and grass at every sowing—or turnips and grass occasionally, for fall feed. But it is not necessary here to have rich feed to fatten up the sheep previous to winter, for they are always fat.

In the article to which I allude, and in this, are many facts that ought to open the eyes of wool growers in the Eastern states, for if the business should be undertaken at the West exclusively, those who pasture upon land worth $100 an acre cannot compete with those that pasture upon land worth ten shillings an acre, and free from tax for five years.

I intend shortly to give you another article upon this subject and other things appertaining to the cultivation of the prairies of the great and growing West.[1] I hope also to become more intimately acquainted with your readers the coming winter. In the mean time I am yours and their friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Sept., 1842.

ODDS AND ENDS.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 9:160; Oct., 1842[2]]

[October ?, 1842]

SCRAP BOOK.—If young men, I have a good mind to say young women too, who lack wherewithal to amuse themselves during the long evenings of winter, would procure a few quires of paper, (that called "post office paper," is suitable,) and stitch them neatly together, and commence saving *scraps* from the newspapers, and past-

[1] The editor expressed his hope "for the punctual fulfilment of his promise" and continued: "We have been a little apprehensive from his long silence on agricultural matters, that he had taken to politics or some other fashionable pursuit, or was lost in a cane-brake; or mayhap, had taken a bear prisoner, as the Irishman took the six grenadiers, who proved themselves such undisciplined captives, that they not only would'nt go at Pat's bidding, but even prevented the doughty hero's going himself."

[2] Reprinted in part in the *Dollar Farmer*, Louisville, Kentucky, 1:110 (January, 1843).

ing them in, they would in the course of a few years gather a large bundle of Odds and Ends, more interesting perhaps than mine, although my first lot have proved interesting enough to cause them to be copied into many other papers. What a gratification to think I have been able to interest and amuse my fellow creatures, and lighten the toil of the laborer—to enable them to improve the mind, as well as the soil.

STORING SMALL GRAIN.—You in the east, who have large barns and graneries, and convenient saw mills and lumber yards, cannot conceive the difficulty that you might encounter when settled on a new farm in the west, forty miles from a saw mill. How would you store a few hundred, or a few thousand bushels of thrashed grain? Easy enough, if you only knew how—so could Careless have sealed his letter, if he had only known *how*. I will tell you how, and when you emigrate to the west, don't forget. Take fence rails and lay down a floor, a little from the ground, and build up the sides by notching straight rails so they will be steady, and then take fine straw or hay, and tramp a layer smooth upon the floor, and caulk the cracks between the rails, and pour in the grain, and stack some straw over the top to keep out the rain, and your grain will keep better than in a close granery, and not waste a bushel in a hundred.

BUCKWHEAT may be thrashed upon just such a rail pen, covered over with rails, much better than upon the ground; the grain falling through the rails into the pen below.

A LOVE OF READING, is one of the passions, which like all other passions not so good, grows by what it feeds on; and that parent who can, and does not furnish the means of whetting an appetite so salutary, when well directed, is guilty of the grossest injustice to his children. Newspapers are the mustard of food suitable for such appetites. Reader, do you take one?

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., 1842.

To Western Emigrants.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 9:193-94; Dec., 1842]

[November 1, 1842]

Readers of the Cultivator—My old Friends—During the last six or eight months you and I have held but little intercourse. To be candid, I did not imagine that my name would have been so much missed, as I am induced to believe it has been by what I am told in a great many letters that I have received. It is true, I had begun a "traveling memorandum," that I intended to have continued throughout all my journey, and brought you with me in imagination over the great northern lakes, and set you quietly down in the chimney corner of a comfortable and happy "log cabin home," where we could have looked back over the varied scene, and called up to view the many new acquaintances, and looked upon their various modes of cultivating the earth, and the many different ways of enjoying the fruits thereof, and then endeavored to find from observation where was the greatest amount of human happiness; for there, be it East or West, is the place to seek a new home.

Now I should have accomplished all this, and I am well assured should have added a little to your happiness, and thereby to my own; but I undertook to drive *too much team*. The consequence was, the connecting chains broke, and although I tried to "toggle" the broken links, it would not do, and there I have been stuck fast ever since.

Reader, let me here inquire whether you have undertaken, during the last summer, "to drive too much team?" Because, if you have, I am pretty sure there is "a link broken" somewhere. This is only another mode of repeating to you what I have often said before about cultivating too much land. I don't mean that, exactly, either; because you cannot *cultivate* too much. But do you cultivate it, or only own it? A great many of my eastern acquaintances want to emigrate to the West "to get more land."

Well, if that is all you want, I pray you come on. Here is plenty of land—good land, and cheap; and if to be the owner of 2,000 acres of good land will make you and your family happy, aye, even happier than they now are, why just bring along $2,500 and you can be the owner of two thousand acres of good land; beautiful land. But what is it worth without cultivation? Why just what half of your present farms are worth that are as uncultivated as the western prairies. That word "your" is wrong; because I am addressing myself to the *readers* of the Cultivator, who have, a great many of them, adopted an improved mode of cultivation. But I will say *the* farms of many of the uneasy spirits of the eastern states, who want to emigrate to the West merely because they want to get more land. Don't understand, by what I say, that I am opposed to emigration. No; like all the first settlers of a new country, I want to see it fill up; but I want it filled by a class of inhabitants that will feel every day, and every member of the family, as though they had bettered their condition by removing from the old homestead to a new and uncultivated spot.

How often do I see and hear the reverse of this. How often do I feel sorry for the fate of the feeble old grandfather and mother, who have been induced to quit all the comforts of the old homestead to seek for "more land;" to get a "bigger farm" in the wilds of the Great West. Singular and strange delusion, that bare acres of land constitute a farm. Let the old man stay at home; and let the young man, with a constitution made to endure toil and hard fare, come here and spend a few years of industry, actually cultivating the rich soil instead of doing as most of us do—"deviling over," and he will be sure to create a home, that to him in his old age will be as highly cherished as that of his father was.

The article under the head of "Western Farming," in the Oct. number,[1] speaks to the men of capital at the East

[1] *Cultivator*, 9:154.

in words of truth, and shows them what may be done at farming on the prairies on a large scale. But men who are able to do likewise, are able to live anywhere. But there is one thing certain; there is no more certain way in which they can invest their capital. Yet such are not the kind of emigrants that are the most likely to improve their condition so as to create an increased amount of happiness for their families; which I still argue should be the moving cause of every mover to the West. There never was a more favorable time for the emigrant than the present. During the rage of the speculation fever, many persons contracted debts that they are totally unable to pay without selling their farms; so that improved land can now be bought for a lower price than used to be paid a few years since for the bare "claim," before the land had been purchased of government. Stock and provisions are also low; and it requires far less capital now for the new settler to make a successful beginning with than it did a few years ago. But enough for the present. In my next, which I promise not to delay beyond reason, I intend to answer, in detail, a great variety of questions which have been asked me during the past summer, which will be interesting to the western emigrant.

Lake C. H. Nov. 1, 1842. SOLON ROBINSON.

FAIRS IN THE WEST

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 1:312-13; Jan., 1843]

[November 4, 1842]

GENT.—Will it interest your readers to hear how we "do up" things in the prairie region of the west? I have just attended two:—The first at La Porte, Ia., Oct. 13, 14. La Porte is one of the new counties of Northern Indiana, which have sprung into existence within the last ten years. It adjoins Lake Michigan, and has a port and *unfinished harbor,* called Michigan City, from which an immense quantity of wheat goes down the lakes;

mostly to the Canada market. The county has an extensive prairie called "Door Prairie," one of the very finest for all kinds of grain, but not equal to those of a more clayey soil for grass. The county, although destitute of mountains, hills, and dales, yet abounds in good mill seats, upon never-failing streams, many of which are improved by fine flouring mills.

The show of stock was small, but indicating that the spirit of improvement has at length begun to show itself in the west. There were some good Durhams, and improved native cattle, and several fine samples of Merino, Saxon, and South Down Sheep—and the gentlemanly Berkshire was there in his pride and beauty. The exhibition of butter, and cheese, and household manufactures was such as plainly to show, that that portion of the community which is the life of all our agricultural societies, had here lent their good works to promote the good cause in good order.

There was also a show of fine fruit, such as no one could expect in so new a country, unless he well knew the remarkable productiveness of our soil.

But the proudest part of the show was of the human species—men, women, and children—old and young, of all classes and occupations, turned out to make this what every agricultural fair always should be, a most joyous farmer's festival—an annual public thanksgiving. And as public drinking is out of fashion, a public dinner was substituted. The tables being arranged in one of those beautiful Bur-oak groves which are only to be found in this country of groves and prairies, were covered with a profusion of good things furnished by the hundreds of fair hands who graced the feast by their presence. The whole scene being enlivened by what should always accompany such a festival, a fine band of music, volunteered for the occasion.

It was a day, as all such should be, well calculated to promote and increase the general stock of human happiness.

I reached home from the La Porte Fair on Saturday, and on Monday I started again to attend the Fair of the "Union Agricultural Society," of Northern Illinois, held at a place called Aurora, on Fox River, 40 miles west of Chicago, on the 19th and 20th of October. This "Union" is formed out of nine of the northwestern[1] counties of the state, almost the entire population of which, has been made up of eastern emigrants since the time of the almost forgotten "Sack War," of 1832, when General Scott struck terror to the Indians, and the cholera struck terror to his army.

"What a change" in ten years! Those of the magic lantern are scarcely more magical. Then the food of the little army had to be brought from the lower lakes and carried upon pack horses across the great desert between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi. Then a steamboat had never visited the little garrison and trading post of Fort Dearborn, now the flourishing city of Chicago, whose harbor is crowded with steamers, ships, and schooners, full freighted up with emigrants and merchandize, and down with wheat and other products of the rich soil of the vast land of unsurpassed fertility, lying around the head of Lake Michigan.

Now every grove is surrounded with highly cultivated farms. The streams abound with fine mills, manufactories and villages. The country is intersected with roads, and the streams are crossed with bridges, while splendid stage coaches career over them in every direction.

While addressing the audience at the late Fair, I could not avoid drawing the comparrison between the encampment of Indians upon the same ground ten years ago, who never broke the soil in search of sustenance, and the six thousand happy, healthy, smiling, intelligent cultivators of the earth then gathered together to enjoy the "farmers' holiday."

[1] The Union Agricultural Society was composed of counties from the northeastern part of Illinois.

Talk no more about the magnitude of your eastern fairs, unless at such a time as your late one at Albany, you can muster at least one hundred thousand.

Here too, some plan in regard to a public dinner was adopted as at La Porte; and I had the satisfaction of sitting down to a most sumptuous dinner with *three thousand* guests;[1] one-third of whom, were the *wives and daughters* of Illinois farmers. This, sirs, is a specimen of the spirit that is abroad upon the prairies of Illinois. And this too, in a country that is still looked upon by your eastern readers, as a vast wilderness, sparsely settled by a demi-civilized race of inhabitants.

I presume after what I have said of the "gathering of the people," I need not assure you that the other part of "the show" was highly creditable to the society. I must not forget, as I have been a strong advocate of having music at all agricultural fairs, to tell you that here too, the company were enlivened not only by one but two bands of music, both cheerfully volunteered for the occasion, while in the procession floated nine appropriate banners, one for each county embraced in the society.

The officers and members were distinguished by badges, and the marshals by wands peculiarly adapted to the occasion, for they were *immense stalks* of Indian corn.

But enough upon this subject. I only wished to let you know that we can do something else here in the west beside raising wheat at 40 cts. a bushel.

It is my intention soon to give you an article descriptive of this prairie region.

[1] This statement called forth a comment from the editor: "Three thousand guests at table certainly beats our state show at Albany, and fully equals the number who sat down to dinner at the meeting of the English Royal Agricultural Society, at Liverpool. But we hope to come up to this number next year at Rochester, and that Mr. Robinson, and many of his prairie friends will be there as partakers in the good things which will undoubtedly be provided for the occasion."

Be assured Messrs. Editors of my personal esteem, and earnest hope for the success of your journal.

I remain yours, &c.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Co. H., Ia., Nov. 4th, 1842.

THE NON-ENCLOSURE SYSTEM.

[Chicago *Union Agriculturist*, 2:99; Dec., 1842]

[November 7, 1842]

"Judge Robinson"—"Judge" him not—but judge his arguments upon the non-enclosure system.

Mr. Editor—I have neglected so long to notice an article in your September No. that it may now be out of place. But I cannot accept the title of "Judge," so honestly bestowed upon me by "F. West,"[1] which I suppose means "far West, as no local habitation is given with the name. I beg to assure friend West and all others that I claim no title, civil or military; and though in consequence of my holding the office of clerk of the courts of my county, or that of Postmaster, I am sometimes called *'Squire,* I am in no wise proud of the title—I must prefer the plain cognomen given to me by a Connecticut mother, whose memory is always called pleasantly to mind whenever my friends address me by the familiar name of Solon—particularly if, as did Incog lately, they prefix thereto a "God bless you." And I have no doubt that succeeding generations will bless my name and that of every other of the advocates of the non-enclosure system. For however those that are now settled around the groves, with plenty of timber and other "fixens" upon the present plan, may honestly (self-interestedly) differ with us in opinion, the time will come when the majority will be able to see that our system will produce the greatest good to the greatest number, and that is one of the benefits which I conceive cannot be estimated in dollars, even if the term millions be used.

[1] "The Non-Enclosure System," *Union Agriculturist*, 2:75.

No, friend West, I do not wish to make use of ambiguity, nor remain non-committal; neither do I ever attempt the "beauty of diction" or "elegance of my periods," in any of my communications.

I do mean "if the plan were carried into effect," that it would actually benefit the present inhabitants of the State of Illinois in the aggregate, more than a present of ten millions of dollars would if placed in the State treasury to-morrow. For it would increase the population of the State so that all the vacant lands would be improved and become valuable in a few years, so that a very small per cent. tax equally divided among such a vast and rich population, would enable the State to redeem her ruined credit, and remove the stigma, that incubus-like, now rests upon and will soon blast her fair fame.[1]

I am willing to allow that it might temporarily injure a man, if any such can be found, "with 90 head of cattle, horses, sheep and hogs, and 60 acres of plowing;" but even to him I do not believe it would prove a permanent injury. It would of course decrease the amount of that individual's stock; but who will doubt but that there would be a far larger amount of stock, and that too of a better quality, in the State when all the vacant land was improved. And the owners of timber land need not fear a decrease in the value of their property. Every stick would be needed for fuel and building—far more than it is now for fencing. There would not be so much complaint about the low price of grain if it could be raised without the expense of fencing. There is another heavy tax that begins to be seriously felt, and will be more and more so, as our fencing gets old and more easily ignited,

[1] Entanglement of state finances and the internal improvement system in Illinois had brought about a state of hopeless confusion. The state was defaulting on her interest, and her bonds were far below par. There had been considerable talk of repudiation. See Pease, Theodore C., *The Frontier State, 1818-1848*, 231-33, 302-15 (*Centennial History of Illinois*, volume 2, Chicago, 1919).

and that is our annual fires, which will continue to bring destruction upon us as long as there is such a vast amount of prairie that *must* and *will* remain uncultivated until we are willing to adopt a more "benevolent and patriotic" course towards the thousands of emigrants that are constantly passing by because there is no more room. Yes sir, you may place it if you please upon this narrow basis, that alone of "benefitting the *poor* settler, and I will still advocate the measure.

Unless some plan is devised to obviate the calamity, the dread one must fall upon the State, of seeing thousands of children grow up without the advantage of schools, churches and many other of the benefits of civilization. For in the isolated locations and sparse settlements these advantages cannot be had. But, allow the land to be tilled without fence, and how soon would neighborhoods fill up and all the other advantages of social life follow. Is not this something "tangible, that can be fairly understood?" Then let the "gauntlet" be taken up, and let the chivalrous knight bring forward facts and arguments that will tend to show that the present plan is better than the proposed one, and that a greater number of human beings enjoy a greater amount of happiness, under the "mauling and hauling system," than they would under the system of universal benevolence that would invite every poor man who had nothing but a spade to help himself with, to come and settle along side of us, and plant and eat, and no man's hog should make him afraid.

There are several other persons whose objections I had intended to notice, but I fear I should be squatting upon too big a claim in your columns, and therefore I will quit mauling for the present.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H., Ia., Nov. 7, 1842.

To Western Emigrants.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 10:17-18; Jan., 1843]

[November 25, 1842]

Another "Trip to Mill."—*Fatal effects of venturing to cross an unsettled Prairie in a stormy night.*

Editors of the Cultivator—How often I have been asked by my eastern friends, whether my account of the "*first trip to mill,*" published in your paper in June, 1841,[1] was "founded on fact." These inquiries show how little you that dwell in cities and densely populated places, know of the hardships and perils of life that the pioneer endures. "How little do we know how to appreciate trifles until placed in a trying situation."

In that article, I spoke of the danger of life to the teamster, who attempted the perilous passage of the prairie in a cold winter night. I also spoke of the beautiful weather of November, usual to this region. Just such weather was the first part of the present month, but what a change suddenly came over the face of nature —a change that brought desolation into the cabin of an afflicted emigrant.

The reader of the narrative I am about to give, will undoubtedly say that there was a great lack of prudence and forethought in the emigrant, and it is upon that point that I wish him to be advised, and not attempt to buy his knowledge with an experiment that may cost him his life.

The 16th of November was a delightful sunny day. "I think," says Mr. W.,[2] (one of my *neighbors*, for he only lived a dozen miles off,) to his wife, "that I will go to mill to-day, it is so pleasant." "I wish then you would go down the river, for they make the best flour there, and as wheat is only worth three shillings a bushel, we can afford to eat good flour."

The wagon was loaded, and away he went, under the

[1] *Ante*, 160-64.

[2] William Wells.

full expectation of being again by his own fireside on the evening of the next day—the distance being upwards of 40 miles.

He was a stout robust man, in the prime of life, inured to fatigue, and so fearless of cold, and so deceived by the appearance of the weather, that he left home thinly clad, and totally unprepared to resist the rigor of the storm that came on next day.

On the next afternoon he started back with the intention of driving home that night. Just at sundown, he stopped to warm at a house, from which to the next, it was 8 or 10 miles across a bleak prairie, without a bush to shelter or tree to guide. His course was east. Here a most furious southwest snow storm came upon him. Who can picture the horrors of that night? Little did the wife and children of the doomed emigrant think, as they gathered around their warm hearth, what the husband and father was then suffering. During all the next day, the storm raged with unabated violence. The cold was intense, and the snow filled the air so as to veil all objects in obscurity.

But they did not look for "the return from mill" on this day, but towards the close of the next, eyes were anxiously strained in that direction; yet the night passed, and he came not. The next was the sabbath—usually a day of rest and thanksgiving in that household. Doubt not, many an anxious prayer went up for the safe return of their best and absent friend.

Night closed upon saddened hearts, full of fearful forebodings. Can you fancy the horrors that haunted the pillow of the good wife all that night. See how she starts at every sound. Do you remember I told you in the article I have before alluded to, how remarkably quick my ear had become. Fancy the same of hers. How anxiously she listened for the cheering sound of that well known voice—how the childlike inquiry of the early morning, grated upon her ear—"has father come yet—why, what *has* become of him?"

While a consultation is holding during the day, as to "what shall we do;" "hadn't we better go after father," a noise is heard at the door. " 'Tis he—there's the horses." No—a stranger enters. He inquires "is Mr. W. at home?" "No." "Hain't he been back from mill yet?" "No! and do tell us where did you get his horses?" They came up to my house yesterday morning, with halters and collars on, and I thought they had got away from him, and perhaps he had come on home."

"Oh! then he has perished in the storm." "No, for then the horses would still have been attached to the wagon."

Ah! thou blessed comforter, hope, that never lets the heart sink whilst thou in thy faintest form holds forth a single ray. There was dread fear, but hope prevailed, until a messenger, with utmost speed, had learned when he left the mill, and traced him up until the spot was reached where he was last seen alive. Then hope forever fled.

On Tuesday, the fifth day after he was lost, a strong force of men and boys, dogs and horses, were spread over the prairie, searching in every direction, between the groves, near the road he should have passed. Towards night, some of the foremost of those who had spread away to the north some 6 or 8 miles, raise a shout, and away they course at top of speed, toward a small black speck seen in the snow. 'Tis the lost man's wagon. He had missed his road, and after wandering, no one knows where or how, had fallen into another road leading to the north, and upwards of 20 miles between houses. Here lay the harness upon the ground, cut from the horses. The reason why he had been compelled to stop, was plain. The bolt that held the doubletree on the wagon, was lost. The bags had been set up in the wagon to break the face of the storm, and a bed made of bran, but no one occupied it now.

Experience and necessity teaches the pioneer of the wilderness to discover tracks and "signs," where an un-

accustomed eye would fail. 'Twas such an eye that got upon the lost man's trail and followed it near eight miles, where he had pitched forward upon his face—the strong man struggling with the stronger one of death—can you doubt which prevailed?

Oh how sad, how solemn, how different was this return, from that one before depicted to you, from "the first trip to mill." Then, all was joy and gladness in the emigrant's cabin; now, the wail of wo is poured out in sorrow over the rigid frozen corse, whose next and only trip will be to the dark and silent grave.

Reader! the motto of this paper is, "to improve the soil as well the mind!" I have given you a subject to improve upon. May you ever be prepared with care and prudent foresight, to guard against the storms that are likely to beset your path through life; and while you gather around your winter firesides, musing over this melancholy tale, let your hearts soften towards those who are buffeting the adverse and chilling blasts of life, and stretch forth the helping hand ere they fall into that cold embrace from which no human hand can warm them into life again.

I hope many of you have not forgotten that old friend of yours of the Western Prairies, and who you will recognise, when I tell you that I am still the same

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia. Nov. 25, 1842.

COST OF A FARM, AND RAISING PRODUCTS ON THE WESTERN PRAIRIES.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 1:338-39; Feb., 1843[1]]

[November 25, 1842]

No, no, gentleman, "your old friend" is not "lost in a canebrake,"[2] nor yet in a snow storm; although one of

[1] Reprinted in *Farmers' Cabinet, and American Herd-Book*, 7:322 (May 15, 1843), in *Prairie Farmer*, 3:44-45 (February, 1843), and in London *New Farmers' Journal*, May 22, 1843.

[2] See *ante*, 329 n.

my neighbors has been within a week past, and actually perished, and that too, in November, in latitude 41½°. He was on a "trip to mill," and got lost on a large prairie on the night of the 16th inst., and perished in one of the most severe storms ever known at this season, since the country was settled.

Little do you know in your "thick settlements," what the pioneers of these "new settlements" have to endure. Not that there is much danger of being "taken by a bear," as the only one that ever ventured into "these diggings," fell a victim to my rifle. As to my "taking to politics," I cannot tell what may happen, as I have known many instances of insanity, "about these days." You will have received "late information from the prairies," before this, which will tell you that the fire of improvement is spreading. The staple commodity of the prairies has always been wheat; and the price heretofore has been so high, that the cultivators have entirely overlooked the necessity of providing, while they may, for a different state of things; consequently the great reduction in price has fallen heavily upon this region. It will not now command over 38 cents in the Chicago market, and although under the operation of some of the beautiful theories of our politicians, coarse wool is equally depressed, yet when you take into consideration that a vast amount of wheat has this season been hauled into Chicago from 100 to 200 miles, the difference in transportation is so great as to appear at the first glance, vastly in favor of wool.

But I would not wish to be understood as advising the prairie farmer to turn his attention to wool alone. I stated some facts in my communication in the November number of your paper,[1] for the purpose of showing Eastern men what can be done with a little capital on the Western prairies, in sheep business, unconnected with any other branch of farming. The farmers in general

[1] *Ante*, 326-29.

turn their attention too much to one object. At one time it is wheat—again pork—and so on. And the grand difficulty is the great want of capital. On this account they are compelled to submit to forced sales. They are unable to hold over a crop. In fact, if able, they have yet to learn how wheat can be kept in stack, as at present they are unable to find storage for the grain after threshing. Will you, Mr. A. B. A.,[1] who has seen and can tell, please to enlighten them upon the subject—yes, the science of stacking grain as practiced in England.[2]

You hear complaints of the low price of beef. Do you know how low it can be produced? I believe you are advised that no finer beef was ever eaten than that made upon prairie grass. Let me tell you the actual cost. I can buy calves at $1 50 each. I have and can hire them wintered until four years old, for $1 50, each winter. Here, then, I can have the finest fat steers four and a half years old, for $7 50 a head—cows, of course, at the same cost, including a couple of calves. The cost of sheep growing, Mr. Murray and myself have already stated.[3] As you are whole hog men, I will give you a few items, and leave it to you to "cypher out" the actual cost of western pork. In the first place, pigs are a spontaneous production. Corn on the farm, the present year, and perhaps it is about an average, within fifty or sixty miles of Chicago, is not worth over 12½ cents a bushel. Oats 8 to 10 cents, and potatoes less. And they being so low, I will not pretend to fix a price upon beets, rutabagas,

[1] A. B. Allen.

[2] Allen appended the following note to Robinson's article: "Agreeably to Robinson's request, we have given on page 335 of this paper, the best method of English stacking which fell under our observation while abroad. It is the same which we have frequently seen practiced in our own country, with the exception of the stone, or cast iron blocks, for the foundation of the stack to rest upon, which are a sure guaranty against rats, or mice getting at the grain."

[3] *Ante*, 326-27.

carrots, &c., but they can be raised *cheap*. The summer feed costs little or nothing, and as often as every other year, hogs will get fat upon the mast, which our oak and hickory groves produce abundantly. The next question that I expect your eastern readers to ask, is, Can prairie farmers raise grain at these prices? I will state a few facts, and they shall draw conclusions.

The first cost of land is $1 25 an acre. The first plowing we generally count as cost, though erroneously. This is worth $1 50 an acre; or to be better understood, I will state differently. Prairie land is abundant at government price; but timber is mostly in second hands and is held higher. A quarter section of Prairie, that is,

160 acres at $1 25, is	$200
Timber, say 40 acres, which is more than enough, at $3,	120
Breaking up the prairie, at 1 50,	240
Fencing it into four lots, eight rails high and stakes, 960 rods, or 3 miles, 15,366 rails at 1 ct. 153 66; 3,840 stakes, at ½ ct. 19 20,	173
A good comfortable double log cabin, such as first settlers generally occupy,	50
Other small buildings and temporary sheds,	50
Average cost of a well with pump, $30, with buckets, $15,	15
I will add to cover contingencies, such as half an acre of land well paled in for garden, a cow yard, hog pen, and other "fixings,"	72
This makes the cost of the farm, independent of the woodland, just $5 an acre—the total,	$920

Here, then, are 160 acres of as rich soil as it is possible to imagine, all ready for the emigrant to take possession of and put in a crop, for the sum of $800. The first crop of corn will average about 15 bushels; in oats, about 20 bushels; in wheat, about 10 bushels; potatoes about 150; turnips, or rutabagas, 300; buckwheat, 25; beans, peas, millet, pumpkins, mellons, &c. &c. "a right smart chance,"

and some of the latter, as big "as a good sizeable boy can tote." The second crop will be some better, though the sods will yet be in the way of cultivation. After this you have a deep, loose, rich black soil, which as you do unto it, so it will do unto you. The practice generally adopted is to take the skin and starve the body—burning straw and wasting manure—"running over" four times as much land as can be *cultivated.* In my statement of prices, I have taken this county (the Northwestern one in Indiana) for a basis. In others there may be a slight variation. Both in this State and Illinois, Missouri and Iowa Territories, there are thousands of locations to be had at about the rates stated.

If such "information from the prairies" is such as you want, you can be furnished from time to time by

"Your old friend," SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Co. H., Ia., November 25, 1842.

CHEAP BEEF AND TALLOW

[New York *American Agriculturist,* 1:339; Feb., 1843]

[November ?, 1842]

As an illustration of the virtue of prairie grass for making beef, allow me to state that I killed a cow the past fall, entirely grass fed upon the prairie, the quarters of which weighed about 140 lbs. each, hide 72 lbs., and she made 110 lbs. of clean tried tallow.[1]

The common selling price of such a cow alive, is about $8. SOLON ROBINSON.

[1] The editor was not impressed. He commented: "If this is all the Hoosiers have to offer, we think they are bound to strike their 'banners,' and reverse their 'corn-stalk wands' before their eastern rivals; for Mr. Ambrose T. Grey, of Pine Plains, Dutchess County, has recently killed a cow *grass*-fed also, which gave 180 lbs. rough, making 160 lbs. of tried tallow. We are not advised of the weight of hide and four quarters of Mr. Grey's cow."

To Western Emigrants.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 10:37-38; Feb., 1843]

[December 9, 1842]

Messrs. Eds. of the Cultivator—Everything connected with the subject of emigration to the west, has become interesting to a vast number of your eastern readers. Enquiries have become so numerous that I propose to answer publicly, the following questions, which, with a great many others have been made to me, and which I now select from a file of letters, a good deal bigger than "a piece of chalk."

I select promiscuously as they come up:

1st. "What is the price of land; can any be bought at government price?" The price of government land is $1,25, payable in specie or treasury notes, at the Land Office in the District where the land lies—a District is from 50 to 80 miles square. The purchaser receives a certificate of purchase, and afterwards obtains a patent from the President. In this section of the state, there is much prairie land now subject to entry, and some timber land, though the best timber is generally taken up, and is held from $2 to $10 an acre.

Many tracts of improved land can now be bought for less money than the cost of making the improvements; because men are in debt and cannot pay without selling their farms.

"Please give me some of the prices of stock?"

Cash prices are low: Horses $40 to $90; six yr. old Oxen, $35 to $50; four yr. old, $25 to $35 a yoke; three yr. old Steers, $6 to $10, each; two yr. old, $5 to $7; one yr. old, 3 to $5; Calves, $1,25 to $2; Cows, $6 to $10; Sheep, common, $1,25 to $1,75; Hogs, Landpike variety, are so cheap that stealing them is no longer petit larceny; Hogs, Berkshire, and other improved breeds, "just as you can light of chaps," at prices to correspond with the present price of pork, which is from $1 to $1,70 pr. cwt.; Turkeys, 20c. each; Hens cannot be sold by the

single one, for we are a centless people, and have no silver coin small enough to express the value.

"What is the price of a variety of farming implements?"

Never heard of anybody in this new world having a variety, unless he borrowed them. Can't answer that question. I guess they are about 50 pr. ct. dearer than at Albany—except Plows. Some excellent ones are made at Chicago and Michigan City, and other places in this region, nearly as cheap as at the east.

"Would it be advisable to bring household goods and kitchen utensils along with us?"

Yes, those that are actually necessary—that is if your route is mostly by water. But you had better bring a wagon, plow, harrow, cultivator, drill or wheel barrow, than a side-board, bureau, bedstead or chairs; but above all things, don't bring the piano; swap it off for a spinning-wheel. We are fond of music, but we want the right kind in the right place. In the winter, a string of sleigh bells, and in the summer, a dinner horn; and I have noticed that a piano in a farmer's house, always effects his daughter's lungs, so that she cannot call her father to dinner with that good old fashioned musical instrument.

Beds and bedding, and abundance of woolen clothing, iron-ware, a small lot of crockery, well packed, tinware, particularly the milk pans, as this is "a powerful" country for milk, and table furniture, and all the "small fixings," about a house, may be brought by the emigrant to advantage. Don't bring lumber, nor pay freight upon articles that you will not immediately want in your new house.

"Would it be desirable to bring grains for seed, and what kind?"

Yes. It is always desirable by way of change and for experiment in a new place. Bring a small lot of every thing that grows for the good of man; and if you don't want them yourself, give to your new neighbors; it will

show a good trait of character, and they will repay you for your liberality, ten fold.

"Is it generally healthy?"

This is the most important of all questions. I answer that I do sincerely think the prairie country, generally, is a very healthy one; yet all new countries are subject to fever and ague, and portions of the west, particularly near large streams, have been severely afflicted.

Where I live myself, it is high rolling prairie, and groves, clayey soil, and pure well water, and is decidedly healthy. I believe that all similar situations are equally so.

"Can the dairy be made profitable?"

I will give the data for each one to answer this question according to his own notion of "cyphering."

The price of Cows, I have given. Cost of summer feed nothing but salt. The winter feed will be fully paid by the calf. The price of keeping being only $1,50. The prairie grass produces the best of milk, for butter and cheese. The average price of the former, I think, is about 7c. and the latter 4c. Upon this data, can the dairy business be made profitable, I think, is easily answered in the affirmative.

"What would be the expense of transportation of a horse team on the lakes, or traveling expense by land?"

The passage of a horse from Buffalo to Chicago, is the same as a cabin passenger. Last season, $18. The expense by land for a pair of horses with a moderate load, I think, will average three cents a mile.

"Is the land stony, if so, what kind of stone?"

No, not generally. There are scattered boulders of granite all over the prairies, and some parts of Illinois, for instance at Juliet, 40 miles west of this, the land is underlaid with limestone.

"What kind of wood is most prevalent?"

Oak of various kinds; next hickory. In some places beech, poplar, ash, walnut, sugar maple, &c. &c. abound.

"What is the price of a good farm wagon?" $60 to $100.

"Of harness?" Common double harness, without breeching, $16 to $20. The country is so generally level, breeching is but little used.

"Can good prairie lots be got, and wood handy?"

Yes. There is as good prairie as any man need ask for, now lying in sight of my window as I write, subject to entry at $1,25, and good oak timber within two miles, for $5 an acre.

"Are good common school teachers, in good demand, and at what price?"

Now, if the word "good" governs teachers, I can't tell. The article is seldom found in this market. If the word "common" governs teachers, I would answer that they are tolerably plenty, and common enough in all conscience. The price $10 to $20 a month.

I think that the west is in need of an importation of *good* teachers of common schools. If they did not meet with good encouragement, it would show an uncommon degree of inattention to the best and only means of improving our condition as a civilized, moral people.

"Can I better my condition by removing to the west? I am blood and bone a farmer. Myself and wife are 43 years of age. We have two boys, 18 and 20; two girls, 14 and 16; two boys, 9 and 11, and two girls, 2 and 5; and we wish to settle where we can keep the family near together. I have a good horse team; good farming tools and dairy utensils, and some good stock, and but very little money?"

Yes; you are particularly well calculated to make a first rate "blood and bone" western emigrant. No matter if you have no money, you can rent land very low, and will soon be in a condition to let land instead of hiring it. I say come on, you and all that are under just such circumstances, particularly if those boys and girls are "blood and bone" farmer's sons and daughters.

"Where is "Lake C. H?" as I cannot find it on any map."

It is to be found on Colton's map of Indiana.[1] It is the county seat of Lake county, Indiana, the North Western county of the State, and embraces the head of Lake Michigan.

"I suppose the prairies are generally level and the land inclined to wet. Of course the streams are sluggish?"

I suppose no such thing, and of course you are greatly mistaken in each and all of your suppositions. The land is generally gently undulating; sometimes hilly and not inclined to wet, and the streams afford an abundance of excellent mill sites.

"Have you any stone coal?"

Not in this part of the State. The nearest is on the Illinois river, 50 or 60 miles west.

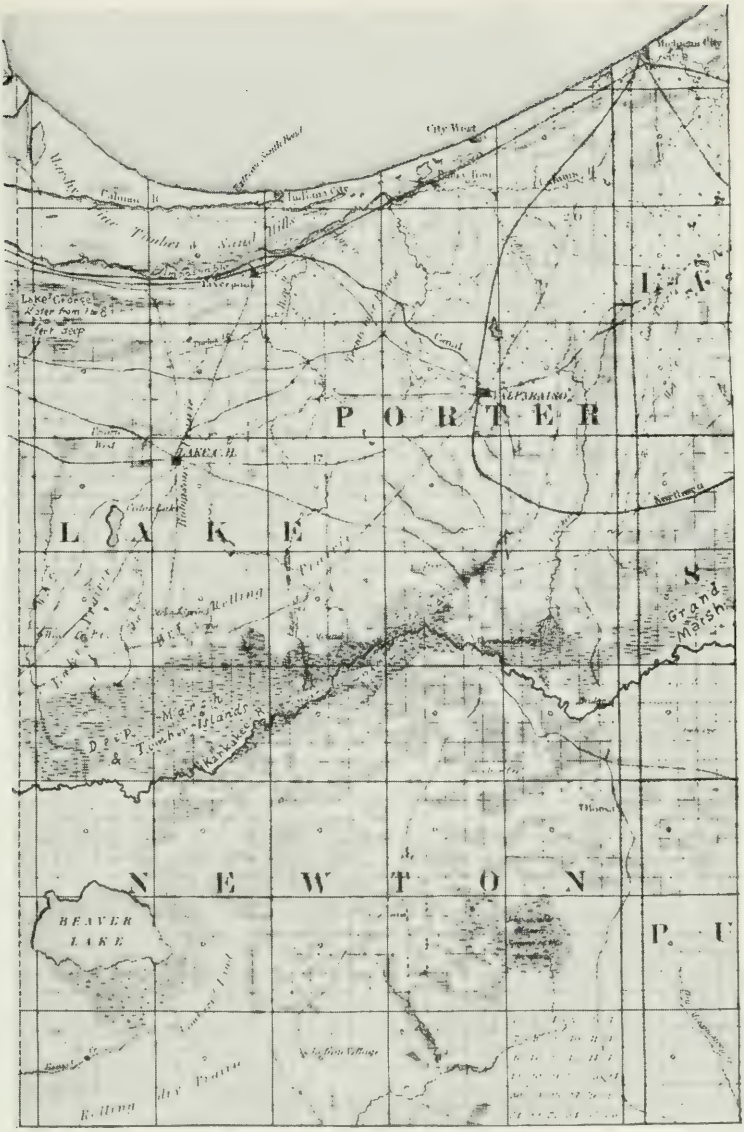
"What kind of people, that is where from, is your section of country settled with?"

Mostly from the eastern states; some Canadians; a good many of the best class of Germans, and a few English and Irish.

"What is the condition of the country as to morals and religion?"

Well, now that's a poser. You forget that it is contrary to the generally received opinion at the east, that either exist at the west. I will allow that some of us are no better than we should be, for we have taken the benefit of the Bankrupt act, and cheated our eastern creditors a little, but we shall pay up, (*when Clay is elected President*) and we do sometimes send you a little spring wheat mixed with winter wheat; but we imagine that you don't know the difference, and ought to be thankful that we don't mix buckwheat. But we always pay our debts, (public ones excepted,) when we can't help it, and we don't get trusted, where we've no credit. Upon the whole, we are a moral people, and if we are not a religious one, it is not because we don't pretend to be.

[1] See detail from Colton's map, facing this page.



MAP SHOWING LAKE C. H.

[From a *Map of the State of Indiana Compiled . . . by S. D. King* (J. H. Colton, New York, 1838)]

"Does your country abound in fish and game?"

I am sorry to say it does; because where it is abundant there is always a class of inhabitants that are too lazy to work, who perform twice as much labor in treeing a coon in a hollow stump, or following a tad pole through a swamp, under the idea of catching a fish, as they would in earning a good living off the land, instead of letting their families suffer for food, while they are eternally "out hunting."

In all my hunting and fishing, the greatest game I ever caught was the fever and ague, which if I had kept on dry ground, would never made game of me.

If you ask the question, with an idea of coming here to follow it as a business, I beg you will stay away.

For occasional recreation, I have no objection, and the opportunity for that is good here. Deer, geese, ducks, prairie hens (grouse) and some other kinds are abundant; fish of the best quality, and some very large size, abound in lakes and streams.

Now, here comes a questioner that I am tempted to introduce in his own language. He writes from Delaware:

"* * * * * * * * * * * I therefore want to know something of your section of country, and the west generally. I wish to move to the west if I could be satisfied that I could make a living for myself and family, easier than I can here, or with a better prospect for the future. Hereabouts, the "skinning system" has been going on so long, that our farms are pretty much in the same situation you say in your traveling memorandum, that the land is near Washington City—to improve it, would cost more than it would come to, and although we manage by skinning the land, to keep our own skins full, it is not so with our stock, for in the spring they often bear a close resemblance to some of Kit Cornhill's wooly breed of horses. Now, can a poor man, in the prime of life, with a healthy wife and children, all inured to labor, *make a*

living in your country, and where would be the best place for him to settle?"

I think I have already answered the first part of this question, but I repeat that he can more than "make a living." There is an Irishman in my neighborhood, who last year an abundance of vegetables, and much more raised wheat than he needed for his family, almost entirely with the spade. The "best place to settle" for a poor man, is in any good healthy neighborhood of prairie farms—plenty of such locations in North Indiana and Illinois.

"How many bushels of corn, wheat, oats, &c., can two hands and two horses make in a season, doing other necessary work on the farm?"

That's more than I can tell—don't think the experiment was ever tried in this or any other country where the means of subsistence are so easily procured; particularly when the natural indolence of mankind predominates over the artificial habit of industry. Let every man answer for himself, how much he *can* raise in a rich, loose, mellow soil. Let no man say how much he *will* do.

"What is the average price of grain?"

That question is more feasible. I think in the Chicago market, for the last two or three years, the following is a fair average:—Wheat 60c., Corn 21c., Oats 19c., Timothy seed 1.50., Flaxseed 87½c., White beans 56c., Peas 62½c., Barley 37½c., Potatoes 12½c., Onions 37½c.

"Is your land clay, sand, or black loam?"

Each and all in different places, sometimes on the same farm. The latter is the most prevalent.

"I wish you to state the advantages and disadvantages of your country?"

I have already stated many of the advantages and perhaps shall some more, as other questions arise. One of the disadvantages you may see in a late communication of mine, of a settler who froze to death while crossing

a large prairie on a trip to mill.[1] You will also find many other disadvantages that emigrants have to encounter in settling a new country, detailed in my former articles of advice to emigrants.

But the greatest disadvantage of all, is the extreme fertility of the soil. And if you have energy of character enough to overcome this, you will overcome all others, and find more advantages than disadvantages. But don't forget, that in all countries, the ease of procuring subsistence is apt to beget indolence. This is the great and almost only danger in the west.

"What is the wages of farm laborers and carpenters?"

Average $10 a month; 50c. a day. Carpenters $1 a day.

"Is it necessary to clear up your wood land of under growth for pasture?"

In some groves when the country is first settled, there is little or no under growth; but by keeping out the fires, it soon springs up very thick, so that it would be necessary to grub out the under growth. Generally speaking, however, the growth of timber should be constantly and carefully promoted, and then in fifty years there would be more timber in the prairie region than now.

"Is your county well watered?" "Can you get wells easy?"

Yes, to both questions. Where I live, wells are from 15 to 60 feet. The first 5 easily spaded, then a very hard compact bed of clay to within 10 or 12 feet of the bottom, then fine beach sand. Stock water is obtained in creeks, ponds and springs; but as the country becomes thickly settled, a great many farms will have to form basins in the clay after the manner much practiced in Kentucky, or obtain stock water from wells. The water in wells is pure, that is, clear, and very durable. It is generally what is termed *hard.*

[1] Printed *ante,* 340-43.

Throughout nearly all the prairie region, good water is easily obtained by digging; 90 feet is the greatest depth I know of.

"Which is the best time of year to emigrate?"

If your route lies by way of the lakes, start from the eastern states in May, June, July, August or September, not later. You should arrive at your destination before November, at all events. May and June, are undoubtedly the best months for traveling. In moving, emigrants often suffer great exposure, which they notice but little at the time, but which sows the seeds of fever and ague, which comes upon them in their new home, and makes them discontented with the country, and sometimes drives them back whence they came, when a little more care, prudence and foresight, would have saved a world of misery.

At whatever period you move, be careful of the health of your family. Above all things keep your temper, and you will be likely to keep your health. Don't be in too much of a hurry, and be sure to get ready before you start. That is "the best time to emigrate."

"If I should purchase an entire new tract, what would be the probable expense of a comfortable dwelling and barn, and other preparations for cultivating."

The first breaking up of the prairie is generally counted in the cost of preparation; that is $1.50 an acre; rails, one cent each; count 16 or 18 to every rod, and calculate the expense of any size lot you wish. A comfortable log cabin with two rooms, can be built for $50. A frame house 1½ stories high, 20 by 30 feet, from $250 to $300. A log barn, 18 by 40, $40. Of course there are several other items of expense that I cannot give exactly here, such as a well, cellar, garden fence, yards, sheds, &c. &c. that cost labor and not money.

And just so with this article. It will only cost you the labor of reading it, and if it does you no good, you have the satisfaction that it did not cost you much money.

And now I again have the pleasure of subscribing myself your old acquaintance and agricultural friend.

Lake C. H. Ia. Dec. 9, 1842. SOLON ROBINSON.

THE NON-ENCLOSURE SYSTEM.

Another champion forthcoming.

By Solon Robinson.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 3:27; Feb., 1843]

[December 23, 1842]

In a recent letter from A. B. Allen, editor of the American Agriculturist, N. Y. he says: "I intend to take up the subject of prairie fences soon. I go against fencing the prairies in lots—it is the greatest folly conceivable. Dogs, taught for the purpose, can and do effectually guard cattle and sheep; and even hogs in Europe are completely under their control. The only fear in adopting the plan here, is, that there are too many lawless people in our new countries, whom it would be harder to bring under discipline and subjection than the cattle, on introducing so beneficial a measure—still I will give one or two short articles soon. Fencing of any kind is a needless and useless expense, and a most onerous and enormous tax upon the industry of the country, and no doubt is the great stumbling block that deters thousands of poor men, who would make the best of citizens, from settling on the rich prairies of the West."

This is *multum in parvo*—and coming from the source it does, is worth much more than twice the amount from you or me. Mr. Allen has probably traveled more in this country and Europe than any other of the prominent agricultural writers of the day. I hope he will tell us some things that he has seen of tending cattle and sheep by shepherds and dogs in the different parts of Europe that he has visited.

Lake C. H., Ia., Dec. 23, 1842.

Agriculture of Indiana.

By Solon Robinson, Lake Court House.

[New York State Agricultural Society *Transactions*, 1842, vol. 2:221-23]

Whether I can make an article worthy of a place in your next volume of the "Transactions," I am not certain. But "I'll try" to answer the third inquiry as applicable to my own vicinity, the north western part of Indiana. I must first give you an idea of the "prominent features" of the country.

This is the prairie region. The word prairie is French. The general impression, at least in the eastern States, is, that it means meadow; and that meadow means "level, wet, grass land." This impression is wrong; prairie means a country bare of trees; and in my opinion, it is the natural state of the land as left when the "great waters" receded from it. For instance, if the Falls of Niagara were swept away, the bed of Lake Erie would be a prairie. In time it would grass over—the timber would encroach upon the edges—the seeds of some trees would be wafted by the wind to the center, and others carried by animals, and by and by groves would spring up here and there, dotting the sea of grass like islands in the sea of water.

None will suppose the bottom of the lake level, neither are the prairies; they are as commonly undulating as any other land; neither are they generally wet. In this particular the soil varies as much as it does in any part of the State of New-York. That is, from the extreme of deep morass, covered with a growth of coarse grass and weeds, twelve or fifteen feet high, to the gravelly or sandy barren knoll—and here the word "barren," suggests an idea.

Large tracts of land in the prairie region are covered with a growth of scattering timber, void of undergrowth, and frequently not unlike an orchard or artificial park, the ground covered with grass; and these tracts are

called *"barrens;"* but why so called, when the soil is of the best quality, I cannot explain.

Between the above extremes of quality of prairie land, there is of course almost every variety of soil suited to the wants of the husbandman. There is one universal characteristic—that is a deep, strong, grass sod, and a mellow, loose, black vegetable mold. This has a depth varying from five inches to five feet, and a substratum varying from loose sand and gravel, of unknown depth, to that of the stiffest yellowish clay, slightly mixed with slate and sand gravel, or rather scales, and some few of lime, which is of uniform compactness after leaving the surface four or five feet, and requires to be dug up with a mattock. This bed of clay uniformly rests upon beach sand or gravel; it varies in thickness from one to sixty feet; such is the character of the greatest portion of prairie land. This clay land being almost impervious to water, requires deep plowing and surface draining, and will then grow wheat with *the least labor or cost of any other land in the world.*

Of course the same description of land will produce all the other small grains and grasses (excepting a few that flourish best in sand,) in untold quantities.

Indian corn upon this variety of soil is only a medium crop. But roots of every description usually cultivated for feed in this latitude, and particularly Irish potatoes, (what an Irish bull to call them so,) grow with great luxuriance and richness.

The natural grass of the prairie *makes the best beef ever eaten,* and remarkably fine butter and cheese; it is also good for hay. There is no description of land upon which sheep do better. The outlet for the superabundant productions that the immense tracts of prairie in this region are capable of producing, is through the northern lakes and New-York canals, and down the St. Lawrence, &c.

"The present condition of agriculture" in this region, is such as you might expect in a country not a dozen

years of age, as it regards the works of civilized life, when you bear in mind that all infants must "creep before they walk"—and that but a small portion of the first settlers in any new country *ever read.*

The great object, apparently, of the great portion of the cultivators, is to cultivate—no not cultivate—but to plant the greatest quantity of land with the greatest possible amount, not of labor and attention, but of the careless, slovenly, skinning system; raising grain to waste and straw to burn; moving barns to get away from the manure; sowing wheat in November, to prove how easy it will die in March; sowing, and consequently reaping, wheat and chess in equal quantities, just to see how easily it can be separated in a good winnowing mill; keeping cattle in winter for the purpose of getting hides to tan in the spring.

But understand me, this is not the universal system, for "the spirit of improvement" is rapidly developing. Improvvements in stock, tools and husbandry begin to be seen; farmers begin to think and read, and educate their children to be proud of, and able to maintain the dignity of their calling.

Now, sir, having told you something of the "condition and prominent features" of this region, need I say a word as to "the prospects of agriculture" upon the great, rich prairies of the West?

It appears to me that every discerning reader will discern that the prospects of agriculture are almost incomprehensible. Who can imagine the amount of the productions that the thousands of uncultivated acres will bring forth, when all are brought under the dominion of the husbandman who shall cultivate the land with scientific skill?

You, in the Empire State, should prepare for the coming events, the shadows of which you may now see dimly. If you intend to compete with the prairie farmer, who cultivates land of surpassing fertility at a cost of only a few shillings an acre for the purchase, you must break

down your rail-roads and fill up your canals, or else we can deliver wheat at your own doors for 50 cents a bushel.

I will not attempt to say what, but I will ask you, what we can afford to raise wool for in a country where the summer pasturage costs nothing, and in a climate where the sheep will winter nine-tenths of the time upon rye and blue grass pasture.

What we can afford to raise beef for, you can easily "cypher up on the slate," when I tell you that I can buy calves at $1.50 each in the fall, and I can hire them wintered by contract for four years, at $1.50 each per year, making four year old steers cost $7.50 each, and as fat as grass can make them.

I might go on with details; but I do not think it necessary. I think I have said enough to occupy all the space that one individual should occupy in the pages of your Transactions.

Dinner at the next meeting of the N. Y. State Agricultural Society.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 1:377; Mar., 1843]

[January 25, 1843]

Messrs. A. B. & R. L. Allen:

Well, and so you "hope to have three thousand guests at an agricultural dinner at Rochester, at your next State Fair."[1] Then let me tell you how,—you must adopt the western fashion, and have a *free dinner*. It is easily got up, and no one feels the expense. Let a few of the spirited friends of these great holidays and farmer's festivals, in the vicinity of Rochester meet together, a few weeks before the Fair, and appoint a "dinner committee," whose business it shall be to see that a suitable spot of ground is selected, and tables and seats built of rough boards, that any lumberman will lend for the occasion,—and so will some crockery merchant, who desires

[1] See *ante*, 336 n.

the custom of the farmers, lend the necessary articles, while a few bolts of cotton sheeting, that will be readily donated by the merchants, will make very good table *linen,* though I would much prefer to see the tables covered with a real home-made flaxen cloth. And now for the substantials, wherewithal to crown the tables, and furnish forth the joyous feast, that will be a real "thanksgiving dinner" to the twice told three thousand happy human beings who will partake of it.

Let the word once go forth, that the farmers, and the farmer's wives, and sons and daughters, are going to provide the feast, and my word for it, you will see such a display of good things as you never saw collected together at one dinner party before. Even many of the dwellers in the city will be aroused by the excitement and novelty of the scene, and pour forth their contributions of delicacies, that will serve by way of desert to the more substantial viands of the farmers. This is the only plan of a public dinner that affords an opportunity for all parties, classes, and sexes to meet together in the full, free, unrestrained enjoyment of life. Every farmer should bring his family, for those who furnish the good things should also be present.

This is the kind of dinner, and this is the way that so great a number met together at our great dinner in Illinois, which I have mentioned in the article to which your note referred to, is appended.

There was a little incident at that dinner, which I should like to see imitated at every similar one. Two daughters of a very repectable farmer, appeared in beautiful woollen shawls, entirely the work of their own hands, even from the *rearing* of the lambs that produced the fine wool, to the last finishing stroke of the excellent fabric. They were publicly complimented at the table, and the association of ideas in my mind at the time, tended much to heighten the natural beauty of their faces, which showed much good sense in every feature. And such incidents will often happen, and be commented

upon and patterned after, if such occasions are given to bring them to light. I look upon these great family dinners as one of the very best features in our agricultural shows. These are shows of human nature. They ought to be fostered and encouraged.

Addresses, conversations, toasts and sentiments, at such a time, make deep impressions upon the mind. And if you wish me "and others of my prairie friends to be with you and partake of the good things" at your next State Fair, you must get up a public dinner after our fashion. Try it; it will go well and do good.

Your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Co. H., Ia., Jan. 25, 1843.

SOLON ROBINSON TO DR. KNAPP.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 3:87-88; Apr., 1843]

[March 21, 1843]

MY WORTHY FRIEND: I might make many excuses why I have not answered your letter addressed to me in the February number of the Prairie Farmer.[1] I have often set a time for doing it, but more pressing business has prevented. Among other things I have had to improve this "6 weeks sleding in March," and when one has been out all day in such weather as we have had up here, next door neighbor to the North Pole, he is quite unfitted for writing in the evening. To day I took up the paper to begin, and sat down and wrote a couple of temperance hymns—for so ran my mood—probably in consequence of having been deeply engaged in that cause at a meeting yesterday. And now having begun, I glance my eye into the very next column, and there behold myself and all my

[1] Dr. M. L. Knapp, Waynesville, De Witt County, Illinois. Active in Union Agricultural Society. Contributor to the *Union Agriculturist* under the pseudonym "Incog.," and contributor to *Prairie Farmer* and the *Cultivator*. The letter mentioned was written after meeting Robinson at the Aurora fair, in October. *Prairie Farmer*, 3:42-43.

coadjutors in the non-enclosure system, upset with a cart load of pigs and tea, into a sea of crocodile tears, and our fine fabric which we had raised for the benefit of unborn millions, and for the purpose of enriching us poor, miserable, half-acre farmers and naked prairie speculators, all stove to smash, by one blow of the big fist of brother Churchill.[1]

Then again in the same paper, Mr. West has knocked me down with my own gauntlet, though certainly in a much more gentle, (I might say *genteel*) manner than the Avon farmer.[2] Again in the March number I have the power of Socrates against me.[3] Really, Doctor, instead of asking help from me, you should gallantly come to my aid. And those other gentlemen who are so anxious to take a tilt with me, must give me time to mount. All in due time. If you or they knew half the business actually pressing upon me, you would only wonder how I am able to answer half of my correspondents in any reasonable time.[4]

* * * * * *[5]

And now to your third question. I do certainly think that the plan of holding Fairs upon the camp-meeting system is worthy a trial. I have no doubt it would attract many merely for the novelty as well as the economy

[1] Alfred Churchill, Avon, Kane County, Illinois. Contributor to *Prairie Farmer*. Patented a harvesting machine, March 16, 1841. He characterized the no-fence system as a no-sense system. *Prairie Farmer*, 3:43.

[2] F. West wrote from Du Page County, Illinois, on December 12, 1842, chiding Robinson for his delay in "reducing the subject" of nonenclosure to a tangible form. *Ibid.*, 3:25-26.

[3] Socrates Rand, of Cook County. *Ibid.*, 3:60-61.

[4] The discussion of the nonenclosure system continued to receive a considerable amount of space. See the articles of M. L. Dunlap, J. I. Crandall, and D. C. Underhill in the *Prairie Farmer*, 3:118-20 (May, 1843). Robinson was prevented from answering by the illness of his children and the death of one. *Ibid.*, 118.

[5] The editor deleted part of Robinson's letter dealing with the assumption of state debts by the general government, holding discussions of such questions undesirable in an agricultural periodical.

of the thing. Then there would be the advantage of having the people more together for the purpose of addressing them, or for transacting any business. No one would be obliged to stay at home on account of his inability to bear the expense; and it might be much more agreeable than being quartered in a tavern where a large sized man has to be compressed like a bale of cotton to fit him to occupy the small space allotted to his share. If this system should be adopted, the Fairs ought to be holden earlier in the season, while the weather would be more mild. The greatest objection seems to be the want of means for the society to furnish the "big tent." But if, as you hint, an admission fee of sixpence were charged, it certainly would put them in funds for that purpose. But I do not urge the adoption of the plan as a hobby of my own—I merely wish to inquire whether it would not be of the greatest benefit to the greatest number. Perhaps others can show insuperable objections to the plan. I hope it will be discussed.

I regret to say to you that I have written this in great haste, without devoting that attention to the subject, particularly that part of it relating to State indebtedness, that the magnitude of the question demands. You truly remark that no subject can be of more interest to the farmer than this.

I ought to have taken you to task for laying on your compliments so thick; but let it pass for what it is worth, considering where it comes from.

Accept, my dear Doctor, the assurance of my warm respects, for your labors in trying to elevate the character and standing of the cultivators the American soil.

I am most respectfully your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR.—I beg leave to assure those gentlemen who have entered the lists against the non-enclosure system, that I will not avoid them entirely, but

will try to meet them manfully. So they must not be impatient at unavoidable delays.

Lake C. H. Ia. March 21, 1843.

Western Farming.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 10:81-82; May, 1843]

[March 24, 1843]

To my friend of Richmond Co. N. Y.[1]—Your letter in the March No. of the Cultivator, has been near three weeks on hand. I would have made more haste to answer it, but since it was written, you must have seen my article in the February No., in which I have anticipated some of your inquiries.[2] And I hope you have also seen the American Agriculturist, published in New-York city, in which you will find some more information upon the subject of farming in the west.[3]

I am now writing upon the 21st of March; a clear sunny day, and the thermometer in the shade, 25° below the freezing point; and the latitude 41° 30′. [By the by, there is an error of 9° in the statement of your latitude.*] The ground covered with snow, and I should now be gliding over it after a load of pine timber near the beach of the lake, only that I was taken slightly unwell after I had got my horses harnessed for a start—to that you owe my present occupation. This is a very unusual hard winter, and the people are learning a lesson of dear bought experience. For notwithstanding the fact that hay of a most excellent quality, equal to timo-

* This was a typographical error. It should have read "Lat. 40°, 30′, N."—Eds.

[1] Richmond, pseudonym of Dr. Samuel Akerly, New York. Born 1785; died July 6, 1845. Contributor to, and reviewer of, the *Cultivator*, 1841-1845. Also wrote under signature of "A Practical Farmer." Akerly, a retired physician formerly prominent in New York City, attracted much attention with his writings, but the editors concealed his identity until after his death. See obituary, *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:252 (August, 1845).

[2] *Ante*, 348-57.

[3] *Ante*, 343-47.

thy, may be made in any desired quantity, as fast as a man can cut it upon smooth clean ground, at the rate of two or three tons to the acre, they did not provide enough for this very severe winter, and the cattle are actually starving to death at this time. Even the ashes of ten thousand tons of burnt straw won't save them; neither will the cornstalks that have been safely preserved for spring feed, any more than keep them alive.

"What, do you say that cornstalks are not good rich feed?"

"Oh no! I said no such thing. I said they had been carefully preserved, and would have told you where, but you interrupted me."

"Pray then, tell us how you preserve cornstalks in the west."

"Yes, I will—that is, how thousands of acres are preserved—by letting the corn stand just where it grew. And such fields as are not gathered by the hogs in the process of fatting, are gathered as wanted through the winter, and thus are the stalks *preserved* for the cattle in the spring. 'Rich feed,' ain't it?"

And now if I tell you how corn is planted sometimes, your skeptical neighbor can reducc his figures.

And firstly, of the first crop on the prairie. The sod is very tough, and is generally broken from 3 to 6 inches deep, and 16 to 24 wide, turned over flat by a plow drawn by 4 or 5 yoke of oxen, 1½ to 2 acres a day. In every second or third furrow the corn is dropped near the shoulder, and the next slice turned over upon it. This produces a middling crop with no after culture whatever. Again, in old land, the ground being furrowed out for the rows sometimes one and sometimes both ways, the seed dropped in the furrow is covered by passing along another light plow, and as soon as planting is done, then commences the after culture, or rather, I should say, the plowing of the ground, and which culture is almost entirely completed with the plow. No manuring, no hoeing, or but very slight, no harvesting in many cases, that

being attended to by the hogs, no saving of stalks for fodder, and as the land is as mellow as your garden, and as free from all obstruction to the plow, is it to be wondered at even by your unbelieving neighbor, that corn can be raised by the hundred of acres, upon such a system, upon such land, without "a regiment of men and boys."

And in regard to wheat, it does not require a regiment of men or teams, to put in 800 acres of wheat, upon land as mellow as an ash heap, where the plowed lands are a mile or more long without turning; and as the seed time runs through a space of near two months, so the harvest runs about half that length of time; and as to when it is housed, I would answer that during the last fall, thousands of acres of wheat were thrashed by a kind of machine that is fitted upon wheels and drawn about the field by 4 or 6 horses, tended by three men, one of whom takes the sheaves from the ground or the shooks, and pitches them up to the feeder while passing along, and the straw and a great portion of the chaff is blown upon the ground, while the clean wheat is deposited in a reservoir, which when full, is expeditiously emptied upon a sheet of canvass, and from thence is taken by a wagon to the barn; so that the barns instead of having to hold the sheaves, are only required to store the grain. And thousands in this new country, who farm on a large scale, have not even a barn for that purpose, but depend upon a rail pen with the cracks corked with straw, or some other equally primitive mode of storage.

And those who do not thresh their wheat immediately after cutting, stack it in the field or some convenient spot for threshing, where, if it is well put up, it will keep far better than in any barn. And the way the straw is disposed of, I have hinted at in the first part of this letter; and many contend that it is the best way, as it is not wanted for manure, and cannot be consumed by cattle in ordinary seasons, and certainly not as quick as by fire.

That this is the best system of farming, or that all

these things are universally practiced in the west, I shall not assert, but that they are to a great extent is true.

It would seem to you wonderful to see so much good soil lying waste—and wicked to see so much good soil wickedly cultivated—extravagant to see so much grain grown for no other apparent purpose but for the pleasure of seeing it grow, without deriving any profit from the growth.

The question is sometimes asked, if land is so cheap and good and easy to cultivate, why don't the western farmers all get rich?

I have already answered this, but I will repeat; it is in consequence of the extreme fertility of the soil. I am not going to undertake to tell why it is so, but so it is, that when the whole land is so cheap, so easily cultivated, and so productive with so little labor, mankind will grow indolent, and do not accumulate wealth as fast as you do who have to dig and delve among the "rocks and stones, bushes and briars, and stumps," and then manure your land at an expense for one year, that equals the value of the rent of an acre of land here, equally fertile as yours after receiving the manure, for more than seventeen years.

And although we can raise corn and oats here for six cents a bushel, better than you can at 56 cents, we cannot compete with you on account of transportation. But in articles of more value, we do, and might to a much greater extent, if we cultivated our soil as you do yours. It is an incontrovertible fact, that you "expend more labor with less profit," than we do. And I believe it is an equal fact, that you make more profit out of your labor; for you are compelled to be more industrious. But again, you are compelled to spend a greater amount of your profits to provide for your artificial wants, in the artificial state of society in which you live. For my own part, I am willing to plead guilty to a love of indolence, and for that and some other reasons, I love this country. But I don't want any more to come here solely

because they are indolent; there is enough of us of that kind now. But if you, or any of your neighbors, who till your little farms, and till them well, would like to till more and till better, but cannot where you are, I pray you come here.

But one thing I beg of you: notwithstanding I would like to see you practice a little different from what I have described, try to forget before you come here, that you ever spent 18 days works, besides the two teams, planting seven acres of corn, or in the whole work of raising the crop, 87½ days; lest you should happen to mention it, as it would certainly injure your character as a man of truth.

Let me see how it would answer here to spend 87½ days upon 7 acres of corn.

Wages, 50 cents a day, or about an average of $10 per month, or including board, I suppose 50 cents a day is a fair price, so that 87½ day's work at 50 cents a day, is.....$43 75

The crop of 7 acres of corn, at a fair average, 50 bushels to the acre, 350 bushels, at 12½ cents a bushel,.....$43 75

A nicely balanced account, saying nothing about the team work and husking.

And again, "seventeen dollars an acre for manuring." Don't tell that to us, while moving our barn to a "clean spot," to get away from the yard where we lost the old red cow, mired in the dung.

Let me see what would $17 do here. Why, as I said before, it would pay the rent on 17 acres of land one year, or one acre 17 years, well fenced and under what we call good tillage. Or it would purchase upwards of 13½ acres of soil, more fertile than yours after being thus manured. Or it would purchase one acre, and more than half build a comfortable log cabin upon it.

Now you see it is as difficult for us to understand your operations in farming, as it is for you to understand ours.

But if you (by you, I mean eastern farmers generally,) and particularly your book farming hating neighbor, will take a journey through the west, there will be no more doubts expressed as to the magnitude of western farming. But which produces the most, (not wealth, but happiness,) I am unable to answer.

And now, sir, I hope what I have hastily thrown together, may give you some pleasure and satisfaction, for it is because I am induced to believe from a great number of similar complimentary notices to yours, that I have been able to please if not instruct my readers, that I have continued to make myself acquainted with you, through the agency of our common friend the Cultivator, and which I would most particularly recommend my new acquaintance, to whom you have introduced me, to subscribe for and read, and if he learns nothing more, I hope he will become so well acquainted with me, as to be able to rely upon what I may assure him is the truth. And not only this particular individual, but some thousands of other New-York farmers, are in duty bound to subscribe for this paper, and at this time, because it is a New-York farmer's paper, particularly devoted to their interest, and because the support from other states has materially fallen off this year, through sundry causes, and the New-York farmers alone ought to have sufficient pride to give the paper patronage enough to enable the publishers to maintain its present high standing.

And now my friend having written you a, long letter, allow me to find one fault with yours:—it is anonymous—this is wrong; you should have given your name; you have written nothing but what you might be proud to acknowledge; besides, you have the advantage of me; to you I am almost personally known; and if I knew your name, and should by any chance be placed in a situation where I could knock at your door and receive, (as you may at mine,) the welcome "walk in," I have no doubt but I soon should become actually known. Thus our acquaintance and friendship is extended, whereby

the agricultural interest is cemented together. This is one of the great benefits of agricultural papers; think of it in future. And now I will subscribe myself your friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ind., March 24, 1843.

WEATHER IN INDIANA.

[Nashville *Agriculturist*, 4:58-59; Apr., 1843]

[March 30, 1843]

To the Editors of the Tennessee State Agriculturist:

GENTLEMEN:—Your March No. has just come to hand —I have opened upon your article *"Work for the Season"—"Oats if not sown should be put in immediately"—"Irish Potatoes should be put in the last of March," &c. &c.* Heavens! Where am I, and where does that paper come from mocking me with visions of warm spring. I look abroad upon the face of nature spread out in grandeur before me. The broad rolling prairie stretches away some 7 miles in view from my window. In view did I say—rather it was in view last summer—"sow Oats immediately" I read again. Verily they are nearly all sown already—sown where they will need no "brushing in."—"Put in Potatoes"—Oh yes, that we did last September, and since the middle of November, we have hardly seen the ground where we put them in. And those that have seen it are the worst off, for where the ground is not covered with snow, it has frozen solid as your mountains, Potatoes and all. Fancy to yourselves if you can while sowing your Oats, that here, the snow is more than two feet deep where it lies level, and a violent Northeast snow storm now raging. So your advice for March, 1843, is not suited to this latitude. Never before since the country has been known by white men, has such a winter as this been known. Such a universal cry for hay, straw, grain or anything that will keep the life in cattle. And the supply is nearly exhausted—many cattle have already perished, & thousands more must die. It seems a very cruel death two, in such a

land of universal plenty. This calamity is not confined to a small district of country, but extends over all the north of Indiana and Illinois, and throughout Michigan and Wisconsin, and probably much farther. And throughout the greatest portion of this famished region, the timber is mostly oak and hickory, so that keeping the cattle alive upon browse, is out of the question.

It is a gloomy time—the storm rages worse and worse as night approaches. What a night for starving cattle—without food & without shelter—for a great portion of the sheds and stables have been covered with prairie hay, which grows so abundant here, and those have been stripped to furnish feed—I have allowed some of my neighbors to strip the covering from some sheds of mine that had been on three years.

This picture will form a striking contrast with your section of country, and ought to tend to make your citizens more contented and happy, and cease to repine at trifling misfortunes. You shall hear from me again when we "sow Oats."

Your friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ind., March 30, 1843.

WESTERN FARMING.

[Albany *Cultivator*, 10:160; Oct., 1843]

[August 17, 1843]

TO MY FRIEND "RICHMOND"—Your communication in the August No. of the Cultivator,[1] as well as your private letter to me, have both been read with pleasure. Your detailed statement of the advantage of manuring, must certainly be useful to all eastern farmers, and the time will come when the same system will have to be adopted in the west; but at present, it is a mooted point whether manuring our prairie soil will pay the expense. My own opinion is, that for corn and potatoes it will, and for

[1] A letter from Oakland Farm, Richmond County, New York, on the "difference of farming in Eastern and Western parts of the United States." *Cultivator*, 10:132.

small grain it will not. It is a fact that wheat, oats, rye, &c. grow without manure extremely luxuriant in favorable seasons. In this vicinity, our wheat is extremely likely to winter kill—generally by heaving out; but last winter it was to a very great extent killed in another way, which I will describe. The ground, previous to the January thaw, was but little frozen, and the wheat remained green under the snow, which was melted off, and by a sudden change to severe cold, was formed into a complete coat of ice over the level surface, so as to exclude the air from the wheat, killing entirely thousands of acres, while the roots remained firm in the ground. Where the snow remained on the ground, as it did in hollows and uneven land, or where wheat had been sown among corn and the stalks left standing, the wheat lived and produced one of the finest crops ever raised. Many persons, finding the crop dead in the spring, harrowed in spring wheat without plowing, and thus in all instances where it was sown early, obtained a good yield. It is a common and good practice, to sow wheat among corn in this country. It is also a good practice, and almost the only sure one, to plow the ground in the fall for spring wheat, and harrow it in early in the spring as can be done. The reason of this is, that our spring usually opens late, and the surface of the land is too wet to plow, but the seed can be harrowed in, although in the mud.

The surface of the prairie is composed of the fibers of the grass roots, 6 or 8 inches deep, which when rotted by two or three years cultivation, is so soft and friable, that when wet, it much resembles in consistence, wet leached ashes; being as easily displaced when you set your foot upon it, and of course when dry, unless baked together, as it sometimes is in dry weather, it is very easily plowed. When well cultivated it is exceedingly fertile; but how long it will remain so under the "skinning" system, is a problem yet to be solved. My own opinion is, that we might even now, take some useful lessons from some of the manure making farmers of the east.

Although we can raise our crops with far less labor and expense than you have shown that you can do, there are but few articles that we can compete with you in your market. The expense of hauling in wagons over a long road, or rather over a long distance void of roads, except such as nature has provided ready made, and the long lake and canal transportation, is a bar to almost all kinds of our produce except wheat. But there is one other product fast coming into fashion here, that we can compete with you, and that is wool: unless our wild and almost insane free trade advocates, shall finally succeed in making this country, as far as all manufactures are concerned, a dependant colony of Great Britain. The prairie region possesses such cheap facilities for wool growing, and the cost of transportation so comparatively small when compared with the value, that you cannot possibly afford to raise wool at the same price, where you manure your land at such an expense as you have stated, or even a tythe of that sum, taking into account an interest of $3 to $6 an acre upon the cost of your land. Here, summer pasturage will cost the attendance of the shepherd and salt used—nothing more—and the winter keeping I can hire done with all proper attention and feed, for 25 cents a head. The great difficulty in the way of western farming, which will continue to increase with the increased productions of grain, will be the cost of transportation to an eastern market; and unless the raising of wool, flax, hemp, silk, and other light articles of value, shall be added to our products, you will grow rich with your expensive manuring system, while we shall barely "hold on," without materially improving our condition of happiness, and undoubtedly our land must deteriorate in fertility. If, and that if is often in the way—if we could ship beef in the late fall or early winter months, we could win your gold for quantity, and golden opinions for quality, for we could well afford to sell the best article for two cents a pound.

26—50109

Pork can be made to advantage here, but it can be made to much greater advantage farther south, where Indian corn is "the great crop," and grows with such luxuriance as would astonish an eastern man. The Wabash and Erie canal which is now completed, will open an outlet for an immense amount of this article, or the pork grown from it.

If I thought it would be interesting to our mutual readers, I would willingly increase the length of this letter, but my sheet is full, and as in the operations of Tylerism I have lately lost the franking privilege, I must close —for I cannot afford to pay double postage. I hope you will continue the correspondence, until our friend Tucker cries, hold, enough. With sentiments of respect and brotherly kindness to you, and numerous other of my friends and acquaintance made through the columns of the Cultivator, I remain the same

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., Aug. 17, 1843.

TOBACCO, HEMP AND WOOL *vs.* WHEAT, CORN AND PORK.

By Solon Robinson.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 4:40-41; Feb., 1844]

[December 20, 1843]

"Tobacco! Faugh! Why, do you smoke?"

"Yes I smoke!"

"Why, I thought you were a temperance man!"

"Well, and so I am I hope, in most things—I use alchohol in all shapes—*only as a medicine;* and I use tea and coffee in the same way; and I use tobacco" ———

"As a medicine too, I suppose."

"No; I can't conscientiously say that I use it as a medicine—and still, long habit has made it a luxury, and almost a necessary to me."

And so it is to many thousands of our fellow creatures. And it is a point yet to be decided, whether it is noxious or innoxious to the human system; and if we do and will

use it, we ought to raise it. I do not intend to argue the point whether it is right or wrong to raise an article from which mankind derive no benefit. For more than twenty years, I have occasionally indulged in the *luxury* of the pipe, and sometimes I think it is medicinally beneficial to me. So I used to think of tea and coffee—that I could not do without. But I have proved myself wrong there. I now am convinced I am better in health, while making use of cold water as my only drink. Long habit has made many unable or unwilling to do without those articles of luxury, and so it has of tobacco. Now tea and coffee we cannot raise here in the West, (though we might use substitutes equally good,) but we can and ought to raise all the tobacco that is used here: our soil and climate will produce it just as certain as it will produce a crop of corn.

What a smoke it would raise, if it were only known what a vast number of bushels of wheat which we ship from Chicago alone, or products thereof, are returned to us in this one article. Put that into your pipe, Messrs. Editors, and smoke it.

And so of hemp. Why, a man hereabouts, though living upon a rich hemp soil, if he took it into his head to indulge himself in the luxury of hanging himself, would fain have to do it with an imported rope.

Do we not all deserve a touch of the "rope's end" for our neglect of this one branch of profitable industry?

"Why, will hemp grow here in the North!" exclaims some open-mouthed wonder-hunter.

I don't know whether it will or not, but I have heard that the article is grown "just across the ferry," in a little place called Russia—that is not quite a tropical country I believe.

And further, it is but a few weeks since I saw where an excellent crop had been taken from the ground in Jasper county, Indiana, about 50 miles South of the head of Lake Michigan. The soil was just such as abounds in all our prairie lands. The owner told me that owing

to the drouth, the stalks were short, but well linted, and prove as heavy as an average Kentucky crop, and afforded him a much greater profit than wheat. And he also assured me that he was raised in a hemp field, and had tried it here so as to be satisfied that it was a much more certain crop than wheat, corn or oats.

And the most of us who have been several years in this country, are pretty well satisfied that the wheat crop in northern Indiana and northern Illinois, is not quite so certain as some other things are in this life—particularly the certainty of the end of it.

But I have come to the conclusion that a few more failures of the wheat crop will not prove lastingly injurious to the West, for it will at length drive us to learn the fact that there is a great deal of grass burnt up, that might just as well be eat up, and if eaten by the right kind of animals, it would exhibit to us one of the wonders of nature—*prairie grass turned into Wool.* And what is so very remarkable, that but few have as yet discovered it, this very wool will make just as warm cloth as that which grows in Vermont. And another remarkable wonder will in time be discovered here; and that is, that water in this country is just as good to turn a wheel to spin wool and weave cloth, as it is in New England, and that the wool will work just as well without taking a trip round the lakes, and I suppose that we could just as well find the spinners and weavers in "hog and hommony" here as there; and although it is said that rum is better for a sea voyage, I don't know that flour and pork are very much improved by that operation.

But we have run after strange idols. Idols of wheat, corn and pork. For years we have thought of sending nothing else to the eastern market, since we have quit sending town lots there for sale. And what hath it profited us? While we have been selling our wheat and pork, we have been buying our leather: yes, for we send our hides "down East" to be tanned. Our wool, and that manufactured even into stockings—for knitting is not

fashionable; our ropes, and even our bags to carry our wheat to market in; and our ———

"Yes, and our tobacco."

Rightly said. Yes, and our tobacco. And what don't we import in return for our wheat? And if the season prove bad and the crop fail, then we go ragged, and———

"Smoke on credit."

Right again. And not only smoke on credit, but sometimes smoke our creditors most confoundedly.

And let me tell you, that we never shall smoke the pipe of peace, while we rely so much upon one single article of export, and depend upon buying almost all else that we eat, drink, wear and ———

"Smoke."

Yes, and smoke—for smoke we will, and therefore ought in that, as well as hemp and wool, to smoke "home-made," and wear home-spun," and ———

"Hang ourselves with a home-made rope."

Exactly: "and thereby hangs a tale," that cannot be too often told to prairie farmers. But I suppose that the critical personage who appears in this tale to be every now and then inclined to slip in a question or remark, by way of sarcastic objections to my argument, would say that this country is yet too new to expect such things. Perhaps it is; but it is not too new to begin to raise wool, hemp, flax and tobacco, to tan our own hides, make our own ropes, and a score of other things. It certainly is not wisdom for us to rely so much upon one single kind of produce, which, if it fail, all fails. I have heard some farmers say that they intended to get a flock of sheep as soon as there were factories to work up the wool. Let me say to such, that the sheep must come first, and the factories will follow as a natural sequence. Last fall, pork was so low that many determined not to attempt to raise only for family use. Now they mourn because they have no pork to sell; and yet, in fact, they could better afford to sell at last fall prices than this, because

the crop of corn and other grain is this year a very light crop. For my own part, I intend to try to make wool my principal crop, until I prove it to be as bad a business as Mr. Jewett of Vermont would like to make us believe that it will be.[1]

When I find leisure to write again, I think I will publish "my experience" in sheep buying, with notes and references, admonitions and advice, for the benefit of those that would go and do likewise.

I hope the Prairie Farmer will not set me down as a wilful deserter, because I have not furnished copy for the printer more frequently of late. I have my reasons, and they are weighty ones. Firstly, I prefer to read the writings of others rather than my own; and secondly, I have been for several months past, as busy as was a neighbor of mine once, who sent a child to call the hired man from his work to make a fire, "because father was so busy." The man as in duty bound made haste to obey orders, but was greatly amused when he found that the great and important matter which kept his employer "so busy," was, that he was sitting in the corner *smoking.* But,—and remember that—*he raised his own tobacco.*

And now, Messrs. Editors, if there is any good in this article, you may give tobacco credit for one good, for had it not been that I had taken my pipe after supper to finish a hard day's work with the quieting luxury of a smoke, my anti-smoking friend would not have made use of the words that commence this article, and from which the whole matter has grown—somewhat like the little cloud of smoke around my pipe—enjoyed by few, disgusting to many, and fated soon to fade away, as we shall do some coming day.

I remain as ever, your friend—in smoke.

Lake C. H., Ia., Dec. 20, 1843.

[1] Robinson refers to an article "Sheep on the Prairies," by S. W. Jewett. *Cultivator,* 10:149 (September, 1843).

Letter from Solon Robinson, To his friend Richmond of Staten Island.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 1:92-93; Mar., 1844]

[January 20, 1844]

Much Respected Friend—Your letter in the Cultivator of the present month,[1] has been read with much pleasure by me, and I hope equally so by the thousands of readers of that paper: who I also hope will be pleased to meet their old friends and acquaintances in the new dress that friend Tucker has very properly put on. This method that you have adopted of interchanging facts with one another as individuals, seems to me to be a very familiar and happy way of conveying useful and amusing information to the public. Your letter too is a most complete illustration of my own theory, that if we will it ourselves, we can always find an abundance of material, out of which to work up a letter that is not only entertaining, but conveys much useful instruction. To me it sounds like the conversation of an old acquaintance from the land of my birth:

The land of rocks, and hills, and gravelly knolls,
Stone walls, and wells, where "oaken buckets" swing;
Where rivers rapid run, and where tide water rolls,
And back on mem'ry's page the scenes of childhood bring.

For among the rocks and hills of Connecticut, I was born. Although you probably thought little of doing so when you wrote, yet your letter conveys much geological and geographical information. It tells me too, that some of the inhabitants of my native state, like many others of all other states, are actually advancing backwards in civilization, when they strike from their vocabulary an ancient historical name, because it is Indian, and sounds barberous in our delicate ears. But we differ in taste. Now to me,

[1] This long letter described a "visit to see the Improvements on the farm of Mr. Morris Ketchum, at Westport, in Connecticut." *Cultivator*, n. s. 1:33-35.

There's music in the soft sounding name of "Saugatuck,"
While "Westport" harshly sounds of traffic, trade and truck.[1]

But from your description, I judge that Mr. Ketchum in the improvement of his farm, has advanced the other way; and I doubt not that it would be useful for some western farmers, who do not now even do as much as Mr. K. used to do, make the value of a new pair of boots a year, to visit his farm and learn a lesson of improvement. But far as your country is in improvement behind what it may and will profitably be brought to, it will be many, many years before ours will be what yours now is. The west is so vast in extent and fertility, and we are so prone to run over a great deal, instead of cultivating a little land, that I despair of a life long enough to see real improvement begin, much more be brought to that successful issue which you have so pleasingly described upon the farm of Mr. Ketchum.

Over a vast extent, in the region of country where I live, stone walls will never be built for fencing; for there are no stones except scattering boulders, principally granite, which have been wafted here upon their ice boats, from a far distant, and to me unknown locality, and lie scattered wherever their frail conveyance melted beneath the rays of a warming sun. These stones as they lay upon or near the surface, are a little detriment to the plow, but are easily removed, and will always be valuable to the owner of the land, and well worth his care in collecting and laying up till time of need. And in some large districts, even this small supply of such a useful material, is entirely lacking. Even where most plenty, they are of such a rough uneven shape, and exceeding hard quality, that I would defy the superior accomplishments of the celebrated Yankee stone wall builder, whom you mention, to lay them into a decent looking stone wall, fire place or well; so they are seldom used except for

[1] Westport lies on the Saugatuck River, and was first named for it.

underpinning. In the first settlement of the country, when brick cannot be obtained, a very good fire place and hearth is made by pounding clay a little damp, into a compact mass, the shape that is required for the fire place, while the chimney is built of sticks and clay, which if well done, costs but little labor and lasts for years. But that is more than I can say of the wooden walls of wells, for at first they give our "hard water" a very ancient and bilge water like smell, and by the time that is well over with, the wood begins to decay, and which I have no doubt is one of the many removable causes of sickness which is wrongly charged to the unhealthiness of the climate. Also the sinful carelessness in which a great portion of the inhabitants permit themselves to live in cold, open, damp, uncomfortable houses, is the cause of many a day of suffering from fever and ague. Your profession, as well as long experience, has taught you what all had ought to learn, that we are less liable to take cold and contract disease when "camping out" in the open air, than we are while living in what we are pleased to call a house, through the walls and roof of which, the old cat and all her kittens can go without let or hindrance. And in such houses, a vast majority of the inhabitants of the west *stay*, and not only for a season, but year after year, using water from such wells, or what is more common, from some hole in the ground that is familiarly called "the spring," (on account I suppose of the frogs that spring into it,) and occasionally going without bread, because it is too much trouble to go to mill; doing without potatoes, because they were to busy to dig them before they froze up; doing without pork half the year, notwithstanding they had a thousand and one hogs, but they were in the woods, and did'nt come up; and as a substitute, living upon fresh beef, green corn and unripe wild fruits, and ten thousand et ceteras of the fever breeding family, and as a most natural consequence, shaking with the augue so much of the time that they have no time to build stone walls, drain peat

swamps, build barns and houses, and of course they have no money to devote to improvement of lands, while there is so much land for sale, every spare dollar is devoted to a further accumulation of acres, to lie like those already owned, idle, untilled and unproductive; or if tilled, quantity and not quality of tillage, seems to be the very height of ambition among western cultivators.

Do not think that this is an over-wrought picture. It is not a week since I visited one of my friends who owns fifty cows, whose good wife had to make an excuse to mine that she had no cream for her coffee. And this arose wholly from the prevailing western epidemic—carelessness. And do not imagine that your friend Solon is a singular exception to this all-pervading disease.

Although my log cabin is rather "aristocraticly comfortable and convenient," and my well is walled with brick, with a pump, &c., and I never was out of pork and potatoes since my first winter here, yet I have sometimes looked in vain for my hogs in the woods, and bought land when I had much better been improving that already owned; yet I keep clear of the fever and ague, and candidly believe that this country is generally as healthy as all new countries usually are. The soil is extremely productive, yet it must be acknowledged that few of us at the end of the year are any better able from the profits of farming, "to buy a new pair of boots," than your friend Ketchum used to be, while pursuing the same careless, skinning system of farming. It is true, that manuring our soil produces but little present advantage, but the time will come when the waste of it will be seen. One reason, perhaps the greatest one, why a more stable system of farming is not pursued in this country, is because that not one person in a hundred feels as though he was working for himself and children; such is the universal all-pervading disposition to change. There is no certainty if a man makes improvements this year, that he will enjoy them next; for the *fashion* of "selling out," and making a new location, is so strong, that no

one can resist it; so that it may be said that nearly the whole of the western population are afloat, with sails unfurled and anchors tripped, and ready to be off with the first favorable breeze that blows. If then you ever travel through the west, bear this in mind, that it may serve as an explanation why you see so few, such solid and permanent improvements as those you have described upon the banks of the Saugatuck. How seldom will you see a synonym of these good roads that you mention, while traveling over this country. For the same neglect of improvement is painfully visible upon the roads as upon the farms. But you must also bear in mind that we are yet in our infancy, and that every thing is to be created anew. That in buying a farm, you get a perfect naked piece of smooth prairie, covered with a thick strong sod, that requires a strong team of three or four yoke of oxen to break up to advantage; and this sod requires several years to rot before it becomes perfectly mellow for tillage. And how much is required beside the breaking up of the ground before such a tract of land is justly entitled to the appellation of farm. What a different aspect will this country present when it has been so long settled as that you have described. Vast tracts of the prairie will be cultivated, but without fence, and timber will be grown for fuel and building. The locust that you mention, grows most luxuriantly upon this soil. No doubt that and other timber can be grown to great advantage and profit. Some of the numerous marshes will also be found to afford combustible turf; and through a great part of the Illinois prairies, stone coal can be conveniently obtained. But I must close, for my sheet is full, and the loss of the franking privilege warns me not to tax my friends with a double postage while that upon a single sheet is exorbitantly high. I thank you for your sympathy for my removal from an office that I endeavoured to use for the public good. Shall I hear from you again soon? I remain your friend, SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake C. H. Ia., Jan. 20, 1844.

How to Save a Drowning Horse.

By Solon Robinson.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 4:91-92; Apr., 1844]

[February 19, 1844]

To the Editors of the Prairie Farmer: Cruelty to any animal is a sin—and cruelty to so valuable an animal as the horse, is a sin of such magnitude as to require the severest reprehension.

Now gentlemen, I put the question to you, and through you to those who are guilty, if a man is in possession of a secret remedy for saving the life of such an animal, and fails, neglects, or refuses to communicate it to the public, is he not guilty of this sin? During the last week, I had the misfortune to get a pair of horses into the Calumet river, by breaking through the ice, and thus losing one of them.

Since the accident, I have been tantalized with the information communicated to me by at least half a dozen individuals, that I might have saved my horse with the greatest ease—"*if I had only known how.*" No doubt of it. But if they knew how, why in the name of benevolence did they not publish the fact to the world long since, that I might with ten thousand others learn how; and thereby not only save my valuable horse, of which I was doatingly fond, but also save me the horror and wretchedness of seeing an excellent animal perish in agony before my eyes, without being able to render the least assistance.

The only excuse offered is, "Why, I thought everybody knew it." It is too much the case, that we neglect to publish our own knowledge of small matters, and content ourselves with the same excuse. I pray for a radical change in this disposition, particularly among farmers. Let us be assured that there is no fact, however trifling, that is useful to ourselves, but what would be useful to others, "if they only knew how." And be assured there are others that would be glad to learn.

Now the manner of getting a horse out of the water onto the ice, as I now learn for the first time in my life,

appears so rational that I desire to publish it, and call upon all that know by experience, to state if it be a good remedy, so that the whole world may know, instead of keeping such valuable information locked up in their own breasts. For my own part, I am sure that if I had ever heard or read of it, I should have remembered it; and in the emergency in which I lately found myself placed, should have practiced it, and if it proved successful, it would have saved me more than $60 in property, besides much injury to my own health, and bodily suffering, not to say anything of mental agony.

The manner of saving the horse as stated to me, is thus: If the edge of the ice is not firm, break it away until it is, and if it is very smooth, so that you cannot stand firm, take a blanket, buffalo skin, or in want of them, pull off a coat or cloak and dip it in the water and spread it on the ice where you want to stand; then take a rope, or chain, or bridle rein, and put around the horse's neck, and twist it so tight that it will entirely stop the breath. The horse will flounder and float quite on the top of the water, when by a sudden pull, one man can drag him on to the ice without scarcely any injury, or danger to himself or horse. Of course, as soon as he gets upon his feet, he should be put into violent exercise, to prevent taking cold.[1]

Now accidents like mine, are exceedingly common in this country, where we are obliged to travel over unbridged streams, while the country is in its infancy and roads are such as nature made them. I have myself lost two horses in the same way, and have known of the loss of several others, since I have lived at this place. And yet I am told that this method of saving horses, has been practiced this forty years. And yet I knew it not; and I

[1] The editor bore witness to the efficacy of this method, designating it "perfectly feasible in most cases. . . . Two men will effect it in this manner; or even one strong, cool headed man, if he knows how. The operation is aided by running a plank or rail under the shoulder of the animal, so as to turn him somewhat on his back, as his legs are apt to catch against the edge of the ice."

venture to say that there are at least forty of your readers as ignorant as myself.

Again I call upon those "that know" to speak; and not by their guilty silence, longer practice "cruelty to domestic animals."

In consequence of my accident, I am at present sick, sore, and sorry.

Lake C. H., Ia., Feb. 19th, 1844.

Robinson to Lake County

[Typewritten copy in possession of Harry Robinson Strait, Gary]

[March 6, 1844]

The County of Lake Dr. To Solon Robinson Cr.

For seven years rent of Clerk's office—at $25. a yr.	$175.–
For the rent of buildings the use of County Com rs Circuit Courts, Probate Courts, Jail & Jury rooms, previous to the location of County seat in June 1840, 3¼ years at $50 a year—	162.50
15 benches for court house—	15.—
2 tables " " "	6.50
1 Do. for Clerk's office—	6.—
1 Black walnut book case for clk. office	8.—
1 Writing Desk & book case for " "	5.—
Cash paid Henry Wells for stove & pipe for clk office	8.—
Cash paid S. F. Gale Dec. 7. 1843. for ½ ream of paper—	2.50
Cash paid for one bottle blue ink. 2 of black and 1 of red.	—.88
Cash paid for postage	—.32
2 county maps furnished auditor Feb. 20. 1844	—.75
Making writ of Election for Justice of Peace in place of Taylor	—.50
Making certificates of allowances to Jurors, bailiffs and associate judges Feb. Term 1844 Lake Circ. ct.	—.50
Solon Robinson	391.45

Crown Point March 6. 1844-

Postage Tax, "a plain view," made plainer.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, July 10, 1844]

Lake C. H. Ia. June 16, 1844.

Messrs Editors.—Some two or three years since I gave my views upon the subject of reducing the postage upon letters, which was favorably received. May I again intrude upon your columns. This subject is one of such vast importance to the "poor mothers" of the country that I am surprised that the press generally take so little interest in the matter.

The little paragraph in the Gazette, May 30th, headed "a plain view," is so plain that any reflecting mind that will carry out the time of reasoning, naturally, induced by that article, must cry out against the odious and abominable postage tax now inflicted upon this country by our "Democratic Government."

And that article has further shown me that I am guilty of doing unto others, that is those "poor mothers," not as I would be done by, because I have not continued to raise "an outcry against it."

From a long experience as postmaster, I am able to speak advisedly upon the subject, and I do say that I know that many, very many are restrained from holding friendly intercourse with distant connexions, solely on account of the exhorbitant rates of postage. And I have forwarded a great many letters to General Post Office as "dead," (though not half so dead to all generous emotions as our rulers are,) because the persons, and some of those actual poor mothers, were unable to take them out. I speak the honest conviction of my heart when I say, that I fully believe that all country post offices would mail ten times as many letters at a universal postage of 5 cents, as they now do: and take the Union through, and I as surely believe that in less than two years the number would be more than five times as many, and would consequently increase the revenue, instead of decreasing it; particularly if the system of prepaying was adopted. And this system I think should be adopted after giving six

months' or a year's notice for the community to prepare for the change. In fact my plan would be to admit nothing whatever into the mail bags until it had the impression of the post-paid stamp upon it. This would unload the mail of tons and tons of matter that is transported hundreds of miles to be used for wrapping paper. This is fact, as every postmaster in the country can verify. In the year 1832, as Agen of the Postt Office Department, I was examining several post offices in Indiana,[1] and in three offices in the county of Clark, I found more than ten bushels of "public documents" that had been sent there by Gov. Jennings, when in Congress, and deemed of so little importance by those to whom they were addressed that they would not take them out, though "free." And although I am in much more of a reading community here, many free documents have remained uncalled for and went to waste paper, while lots and lots of Legislative documents and newspapers every year are marked "dead" because the owners will not pay the tax to make them live.

So, sirs, I would make every thing mailed pay. Let all the public offices that now frank, charge the money paid, with day of date and cause, and let that account be a matter of record, and pass the ordeal of the proper Auditor.

I would, instead of allowing "a limited number of

[1] The Post Office Department in a letter of May 26, 1832, instructed Robinson to act in concert with Daniel Kelso in detecting depredations on the mail. In December, 1832, Robinson appeared as a witness in the case of the *United States* v. *William C. Keen*, postmaster at Printer's Retreat, Switzerland County. The case was dismissed at that time for lack of evidence but Keen was later tried and convicted on a charge of secreting a letter containing two bank notes. On December 22, 1832, Robinson was asked to return his commission for investigating the mails. Order Book of the Federal District Court of Indiana, in Federal Building, Indianapolis; Postmaster General, Letter Books, vol. Y, pp. 427-28; vol. Z, p. 1, in Post Office Department, Washington, D. C.; Final Record Book, United States Circuit Court, Federal Building, Indianapolis, 2:392-97.

franks to members of Congress," allow them a fixed sum for postage—say $50 a year. It would do away with a world full of corruption, carried on under cover of franking privilege. The editors of some half-starved newspapers, who transact all their business upon the credit system, will of course cry out against pre-paying for their own papers. But the system will redound greatly to the advantage in a short time, of all well established papers. True it will greatly reduce the "exchange list," and so it should, as nine-tenths of it would be cut off at any rate, if the editors were even obliged to pay postage on the papers that they receive, and which they never read.

The new system would work so much easier than the present unwieldy machine, that all post masters of the small offices might well afford to dispense with the franking privilege, and in all larger offices, with a part of the compensation. The cost of one half the clerks, too, in all larger offices, as well as in the General Post Office, would be dispensed with, and as a still further reduction in expenses, all the great mail contracts would be taken at least 10 per cent less, and those from Washington 50 per cent less.

Letters of course would increase—lumbering, unsound, and often unreadable matter, would cease to be mailed.

The circulation of newspapers in their own vicinity would greatly increase, and decrease upon long distances, even allowing the tax to remain as it is; which, however, I would regulate equally upon all printed matter, *by the square foot of surface*, without regard to distance.

This thing of a scale of prices for a certain scale of miles, is a great humbug. When a letter is once deposited in the Post Office, 49-50 of all the trouble and expense is incurred upon sending and delivering it 5 miles, that is 500.

There should be but one price upon all letters mailed, so far as regards distance, and that price should be so low as to do away with the prevailing disposition that now exists among all classes, to "cheat the P. O."

I do not expect to see a reform of this great national abuse, during the present Congress, for whoever heard of those now calling themselves "Democrats," feeling a disposition to do anything for the relief of the needy members of our community; but let the next Congress be elected with this express understanding, let the watchword of the Whigs be "Reform of the P. O. Department." Of course the Locofocos will oppose it, but if Editors will take hold in the right spirit, we can carry it.

I make this bold assertion, and would willingly pledge my life upon it, that if Congress will repeal all Post Office laws, and charter a private company for that purpose, that the community shall be better served with mail accommodation, than they now are, for 5 cents postage on all letters, and 1 cent on all papers, or an equal amount of printed matter of that in the Cincinnati Gazette. This is fact, perfectly indisputable fact—and to the shame of our "democratic" government, be it said, that they maintain an odious monopoly, that makes this a fact, and by means of which thousands of *American mothers* are actually legislated out of the privilege of even hearing from an only child.

It is "a case of wrong, so palpable," that it ought to kill any political party, that has the power and not the will to abolish the wrong.

Let the watchword then be in all coming Congressional elections, "Down with the P. O. monopoly, a reform of its abuses."

Perhaps I have said enough, I cannot well say more; for this sheet is full, and I cannot afford to pay two shillings for the privilege of putting a wrapper over it. It is for the same reason that you do not more frequently hear from me. The abominable postage tax upon all the warm impulses of the heart, is calculated to dry them up, and make bad citizens of those that would be good if properly encouraged.[1] I remain most respectfuly, your old friend, S. R.

[1] From 1816 to 1845 postage on a single sheet of paper not going over 30 miles was 6 cents; not more than 80 miles, 10 cents; not

When, Where, and How to Get a Drove of Sheep.

By Solon Robinson.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 4:205; Sep., 1844]

[July, 1844]

To the Editors of the Prairie Farmer: A long continuation of feeble health is my excuse for not communing with your readers for some months past. And I should not attempt it now, only that I promised you when at your office a few weeks since, and that the information I have to give is wanted *now* (for I am not as well as when I last saw you.)

You state that particular information is wanted as to where a person shall go to buy sheep—when and how to go—the expense—cost of sheep, &c.&c.

The best information I can give is my own experience, and advice founded upon that experience.

The nearest point where sheep can be bought to good advantage, is in some of the central counties of Ohio; distance from Chicago, 300 miles; the route, by La Porte, South Bend, Goshen, and Fort Wayne, Ia., Wiltshire, St. Mary's, Sidney, Urbana, Springfield, &c.; or else from St. Mary's bear more east through Logan, Union, and Delaware counties of Ohio. Another route is through Michigan by way of Toledo, into the northeastern part of Ohio, which will increase the distance and cost of sheep, but generally speaking give a better quality—that is to say, a finer wool breed; leaving the word *better* for future discussion.

more than 150 miles, 12½ cents; not more than 400 miles, 18¾ cents; for greater distances, 25 cents. Robinson's views on postal reform were carried out in part not long after he wrote this article. In 1845 postmasters of various large cities were permitted to issue 5- and 10-cent stamps at their own expense, and in 1847 the national government began the sale of 5- and 10-cent stamps. Beginning with 1851 the rate was reduced to 3 cents for a distance up to 3,000 miles and in 1856 prepayment was required. In 1863 the 3-cent rate was established for all distances and free delivery was begun in some of the larger cities.

I left home last year the last of August, with one man and a boy 12 years old; I was absent 37 days, and brought in about 800 head of "good common" sheep, that is, an average of about half-blood Merinos. I bought in Champaign and Clark counties, on the waters of Mad River. The prices varied from 50 to 87½ cents, and averaged upon the 500 which I bought myself, 66¾ cents. The other part of the drove were bought by the man who drove in company with me, and I have not the cost. I sold a part of the wool from this purchase when last in Chicago at 35¼ cents, and according to that, the average price would have been about 31 cents upon the whole clip. The average weight of the fleeces is 2½ lbs. Drove sheep never yield as much wool the first year as after, especially when poorly wintered. The average cost of my sheep at home was 81½ cents each, which includes all the expense of three hands and three horses, going, buying, and extra help at times, and the expense of one additional horse on the return, *except* about a quarter of the total expense out, which was borne by the man in company with me as his proportion. This average also includes all lost sheep, but does not include my own time. We will therefore add 37 days time of one man and boy, and three horses and wagon, including wear and tear of all the "fixings" at $1.25 a day, $46.25—less than 10 cents a head, while the actual cash expense was a fraction over 10 cents, but including losses, 14¾; so that it may safely be said that one can go from Chicago to Ohio and bring in from 500 to 800 head of sheep, at 25 cents a head, and that a good lot will cost less than 70 cents a head.

Now as two very important questions will be asked by every reader who has any notion of buying sheep, I mean to ask them and answer them myself.

First, What is the need of all these horses and wagon? and next, With them and hands, how do you contrive to travel at an expense of less than $1.50 a day?

First, then, When starting for a drove from here, I would have a good light two horse wagon, a feed trough

attached behind; a good tent, made of 30 yards cotton drilling; 2 buffalo skins, 3 blankets, 1 horse-bucket, 1 do. for drinking-water, 1 tea-kettle, (as men *will* drink coffee, and so will I when on the road where I am obliged to make the water bitter to destroy a worse taste,) 1 coffee-pot, a pound of ground coffee in a little bag, a frying-pan, a small pot, 6 round tin plates, 3 cups, 3 knives and forks, a little pail for butter, a wooden box for sugar, a few other small fixings in the provision chest, 40 lbs. of bacon, a week's supply of bread, a bag of potatoes, two or three bags of oats, a trunk of necessary clothes, (old ones,) an axe, an auger, a little spare rope and a few leather strings—and I am ready for a start. Rain or shine I would sleep dry and warm in my tent, which is made, when set up, in the shape of the roof of a house, the ridge supported on a pole placed upon two posts about seven feet long, sharpened and stuck into the ground; the bottom is fastened with pins, one gable end closed and the other open towards the fire—cooking my own supper and eating it from a broad board held up on 4 sticks stuck in the ground, and partaking of all the comforts and conveniences that an "old camper" always knows how to provide.

I would take with me a man and boy, and a saddle and bridle, but no saddle horse, because I could purchase one there for $25 or 30 that would bring $40 at home. In driving sheep, a good dog or horse is very necessary; the average distance should not be over ten miles a day, if yarded at night; or thirteen miles if pastured at night. The expense of the baggage waggon and horses and driver is much less than it would be without them, besides the great convenience of having a wagon along, which enables one to camp wherever wood, water, and feed can be had at night, without being obliged to "push ahead" to a tavern.

Two good drivers can drive from 500 to 800, though three are much better, and sometimes actually necessary.

I find on looking over my memorandum, that I was

nine days traveling last summer, before I commenced buying, with three hands and three horses—cash out, $5.61, including horse-shoeing and wagon-repairing—all the horse-feed purchased, and nearly all the provision taken from home. I spent about a week in buying, and hired an extra hand at a dollar a day, which with the cost of collecting and keeping sheep &c. is all included, as before stated, in the average expense per head. I was 3 weeks on the road home—800 sheep, 4 horses, 3 hands, and about half the time 4 hands to board, and the expense for every thing was $35.04, averaging $1.66¾ a day, and grain enormously dear on account of the scarcity occasioned by a great drouth. The actual cost of driving 800 average per head 4⅜ cents, and the adding in time of men and horses, not over 9 cents a head. The larger the drove, the less average per head expense.

A short piece of advice about keeping, and I have done bleating about sheep. Before you start to buy, be prepared for keeping. Sheds are necessary—but more particularly good "wind breakers," and dry yards. If situated upon clay prairie, the yard must be made dry by ditching and the use of straw. Sheep are loth to leave the grass in the fall, even after all nutriment is gone from it. Be careful that you do not let them get poor at this season. Put them up and if they refuse hay, give them sheaf oats; fed in boxes well constructed there will be no loss. If you keep the sheep fat the first part of the winter there is no danger. Prairie hay does not agree so well with sheep the first winter, and they will need more nursing with grain, turnips, tar, salt, sulphur, copperas, &c.

The best paint for marking sheep is *dry* Venetian red. It combines with the oil of the wool and is indelible. A thief stole twenty five from me and tried his best to cover up the mark with tar—but it would not do—the guilty blush was there.

Another much neglected thing about keeping sheep must be attended to—that is, poisoning the wolves. A

drachm of strychnine (the extract of nux vomica or "dog butter") costs $1.75 and will make 175 doses. No matter if it kills a few dogs too—they have killed more sheep for me than ever wolves did.

Do n't forget to shut up your own bucks from July 1 to Nov 15, and make wethers of every other man's that run at large. And above all, do n't forget to get the sheep. And do n't forget the good advice of your old friend.

Lake C. H., Ia., July, 1844.

Driving Sheep to the Western Prairies.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 4:26-27; Jan., 1845]

[November 27, 1844]

I HAVE already written "Advice to Western Emigrants," as well as some information upon the subject of keeping sheep in this prairie country, "Cost of a Prairie Farm," &c., for which see Vol. I. of the American Agriculturist.[1] I now propose to furnish your eastern readers a *guide-board,* to direct those vast flocks of sheep whose heads are turned westward to stock the prairies; and these I will start from the Western part of New York, and drive them to the north-western corner of Indiana, and there put them into winter-quarters.

I will suppose a flock of 1000 sheep, with a large proportion of ewes, at least three-fourths, and about 30 good rams. I will also suppose the lambs yeaned about the 1st of April, and shearing over the 1st of June.

> "Then up and away with jingling bells,
> Over the hills and through the dells;
> The prairie land is far away,
> But full of grass and sweetest hay."

But first of all, before you start, *get ready.* And like the member who spoke upon the "hog law," who remarked that "he ought to know something of 'em, for he was brought up among them," I would also have you during the drive as familiarly connected with the sheep as he

[1] Printed *ante,* 343-47.

was with the hogs. Every night you must lie down with the flock, and with them rise in the morning. To do this then, first of all, before you start, I say again, *get ready.* Shall I tell you how? "Yes!" Well then—first procure a good stout, steady, quiet yoke of oxen. "Ha! ha! ha!!! to drive sheep with, hey! Why, confound the fellow, he is going to plowing among the stones of his old native state." Oh, no! I am going to tell you how to drive sheep with a yoke of oxen; to which I wish you to attach a good substantial wagon, with a box 14 feet long, having boards about one foot wide projecting out over the wheels, to support the cover, and thereby make more room inside, which is to form a house in which you will cook, eat, and sleep for the next two months. In the forward part you will have a small light cooking-stove, with all your dishes of tin; a table with folding legs (the projecting board upon each side forming seats); and upon a platform made level with the projecting boards you will have ample room and space for a bed for yourself and three hands, while underneath you have stowage room for trunks, &c.

Procure for yourself a cheap saddle-horse, which you can turn out upon grass at night, or tie to the wagon and feed, and two dogs, and with three steady, sober young men, and then, after provisioning your ship, you *are ready.*

Of course, you will not neglect to put on board an axe, a water bucket, and sundry "small fixings," that will enable you to live without committing that heinous sin—"borrowing."

You must, particularly at first, and on dusty or muddy days, drive slow—not over ten miles—increasing as the weather and roads are fine, to 15 miles. Upon rainy days, don't expose yourself, and hands, and flocks, to disease and death, merely because "it is such hard work to lie still." Keep quiet—drive slow—let the sheep graze—and be sure that you get up in the morning, and put the sheep to eating the dew—rest an hour at noon, and al-

ways stop, the sun an hour high. And above all things before you start, procure an account of the sufferings of the prisoners confined in the black hole of Calcutta, and whenever you are tempted, "to save trouble," to shut your flock up at night in some dirty little yard, just read that account before you do it. Give them at night ample room to spread themselves.

After you have got a little out of the settlements, you need not seek for a lot at night at all Here now your horse comes of use. Ride ahead, and select some good spot for your camp; place the wagon, and gather the flock around it, and with a little salt tell them that is their home. Then let them graze till dark, and then herd them all up around "home," and they will soon lie down, and your dogs under the wagon will take care of the rest till morning. You have no idea how cheap you can travel in this way. The expense on the road will not amount to $1 50 a-day.

A few sheep will fall lame. These and any sickly lambs, should be at once disposed of for what they will fetch; as they tend to detain the whole flock, and soon cost more than they come to.

I would advise that the flock should be of a medium grade of wool, and all strong young sheep. If a finer grade of wool is desired, let the bucks be selected for that purpose. A larger per cent. of loss always takes place the first year, than after—and fine wool grows upon the most delicate carcass. This mortality the first year is owing to the fatigue of driving, and some difference of climate and soil, and a very great difference in the feed, both green and dry.

I will suppose this flock has arrived at the end of its long journey in the month of August, and that you desire to establish winter-quarters upon an entire new plan, or at least upon some small improvement, that you may purchase. I would prefer a location of prairie land adjoining timber, having the timber with plenty of brush on the north and west side as a wind-breaker.

After your arrival, the flock must be in the constant care of one hand and the dogs, or for lack of dogs he must have a horse, as the sheep feel a constant restless disposition to find the outside fence of the "big paster." They must also be put up at night as near the house as possible, and even then a little sneaking prairie wolf will sometimes creep in and make a little mutton,—though a good dog will keep them off, and they are fast growing few and far between. They are easily destroyed by poison, the best for that purpose being strychnine, which is the concentrated poison of nux vomica. One grain is sufficient to produce death in any of the canine race, or other noxious "varmint." It may be administered by putting it in pieces of meat just large enough for a mouthful; or otherwise it is a very good way to put lumps of lard upon chips, and put the poison in the centre, and then place the bait around the sheep-fold fence, or in any other place likely to be visited by the wolves. The big wolves are not prairie settlers. Sometimes, though very rarely, a sheep is bitten by the massasauger, a small black rattlesnake, and then, for aught I know, you will soon have a dead sheep. In my next I shall speak of winter-quarters.[1] SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court House, Ia., Nov. 27th, 1844.

NOTES OF TRAVEL IN THE WEST.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:92-94; Mar., 1845]

[Covering January 1-11, 1845]

January 1, 1845—My old acquaintances, the Editors and readers of the Cultivator, I hope will be pleased to see that I have risen with the sun, who shines forth this morning with all the beauty and much of the warmth of a May morning, not only to wish them a single "happy new year," but with the intent of devoting many weeks,

[1] Robinson's second article, on winter quarters for sheep, appeared in the February issue of the *American Agriculturist* (4:55). It is not reprinted.

perhaps months, in daily intercourse, and agreeable conversation.

In my card introductory, which I have printed for the occasion, I announce myself as "Traveling Correspondent of the Cultivator," and in that capacity I hope to make my notes of travel, as I proceed through the South Western States, somewhat interesting to both Eastern and Western readers.[1]

So far, this has been a remarkably mild and pleasant winter; almost without snow, and no very severe cold weather; and now the warm sun bids fair to carry off the little ice already formed. Bad weather for the growing wheat, which does not look so well as it did last year, and so far as my observation extends, there are not as many acres growing.

Now, Messrs Editors, and you my dear old friends who have so often told me that you delighted to read my letters from the West, let me in fancy seat you by my side in my buggy, wrap you in Buffalo skins to protect you from the prairie blast, give the word to a pair of excellent mares, (by the bye, I always prefer mares for work,) and we will leave the home of your old friend upon this new day of a new year, and in the course of our long ride, we shall see many things that will be new and strange to you as well as me. The top of the ground is slightly thawed, and has the appearance and consistency of a first rate article of "paste blacking," ready prepared for use; and although we may get an over supply on coats as well as boots, be not alarmed; it will "rub off when it gets dry;" and even if it did not, it will not give us a very singular appearance, for in this respect, all men (travelers) are equal.

The first object of importance that meets our view, is

[1] Luther Tucker had announced in the January issue, 1845 (n. s. 2:10), Robinson's proposed tour of the southwestern states, "for the purpose of procuring information and promoting the interests of 'The Cultivator'."

a new church, crowned with the cross,[1] that tells us that we are in the midst of a thriving settlement of Prussian Germans, thousands of whom are annually occupying the tens of thousands of vacant acres of land in this country. They are generally men of but moderate means, and content themselves with second rate land, and conduct their farming operations upon a small and rude plan, and adopt the improvements in agriculture of their go-ahead Yankee neighbors with slow caution. Yet there are some things that we may learn of them. If they do not go over as much ground, they generally do it better. They almost universally use oxen instead of horses; and what is more, you will find their rude log stables plastered up with mud, so that they are as warm and comfortable as their own dwellings, and comparatively more neat; for it must be said that the inside of their houses often presents such an appearance in regard to neatness and comfort, as would be "shocking" to some of my down East lady friends, who look upon a log cabin at best, as a name synonymous with every degree of discomfort.

Eight miles from home, we cross the western line of Indiana, and enter upon the eastern borders of the great prairie State of Illinois, over hills, and through ravines and deep dells, that will give the lie to that preconceived idea that the dwellers upon our broad prairies, inhabit one vast level plain. This part of the State (Will county,) is thinly timbered, and dotted with farms, all of which have sprung into existence within the last ten years, at which time I knew it as one vast wilderness. I spent the night in the hospitable mansion of Dr. Hitchcock, *late* postmaster of "Crete," but who, like many others of the devoted friends of agricultural improvement, who never abused the franking privilege, but some times used it to advance that science, has been thrust aside to make room for a more active politician. I visited

[1] Ball mentions a Catholic chapel built on Prairie West, a few miles west of Lake Court House, in 1843. *Lake County, from 1834 to 1872*, 88.

the Doctor some two years ago, and found him in a very small log cabin, standing upon an unenclosed waste of prairie; and now I find him in a snug frame house, surrounded by a large well enclosed farm. Most of his fence is laid straight, the ends of the rails fastened by short blocks, which he prefers as a saving of timber, (a very important item) to the common worm fence. I objected to this, as less substantial than worm fence, but he assures me that when well staked, and with heavy riders, the wind has no effect upon it, and being straight, he can plow closer, and thus give his fields a better appearance. His lady-like eastern wife, is just such an one as is calculated to make the "new home in the West" comfortable. I found the whole house carpeted with the most beautiful rag carpet I ever saw, all the work of her own hands.

The 2d of January, like the day previous, was another lovely day, for which I was thankful, as I had a dozen miles across an open unsettled prairie, which must long remain unsettled, unless cultivated without fence, or else by some as yet undiscovered method of fencing; for the settlements are already as much extended from the groves upon each side as circumstances will admit, and the experiment of sod fence, I look upon as a total failure. Twelve miles from Juliet,[1] we strike the "Hickory Creek Settlement," one of the oldest in this part of the State, possessing a fine body of timber, good mill privileges excellent prairie, and many well improved farms, the new houses and barns upon which show a thriving Yankee population; there are but few orchards coming forward, and in many cases where houses are situated upon the bleak prairie, there is not a tree or shrub visible. This is a neglect that I cannot too highly censure. Neither can I too highly censure an almost equal neglect to make good roads through so good a country.

JULIET.—This town is situated upon the "Riviere des Planes," (a good sized mill stream,) 40 miles south-west-

[1] Joliet.

erly from Chicago, and containing about 1,500 inhabitants, many of whom, are to all appearance, "hanging on" to the long deferred hope that the Illinois canal that follows the bank of the river, and divides this wide spread straggling village, will soon be recommenced, and restore them to that prosperity that originally built up the place, and in fancy made many rich, and in reality made more poor. The village is situated upon a most sterile limestone rock, covered with barely soil enough to sustain a little grass, and every thing around shows evident signs, that through this mile wide valley, once rolled Niagara's mighty flood, at that period of long past time before the waters had passed the northern boundary at the heights of Queenston, and the thunders of the great falls were as yet unheard and unknown.

One of the most creditable things that I can say of Juliet, or of her half and half dead and alive population, is that during the last summer one of her enterprising citizens, (the Hon. J. A. Mattison,[1]) has put in operation a small woolen manufactory, containing at present four sattinet and one broadcloth loom and other machinery, all finished and operated in the best manner. By the way, I would here say to you that this good firm, fine homespun suit that you see I am dressed in, was colored and dressed at this establishment. As such manufactories are real blessings to this "to be" great wool country, I hope the proprietor will be greatly blessed in his undertaking.

After finishing some business that detained me 24 hours here, I set off in the afternoon of the 3d, to visit one of the largest farms that I know of in this part of the State, situated about 14 miles westerly, most of the way across open prairie. Unlike the two previous pleasant days, this was one that would give us an idea of what a "gentle prairie breeze" was like. The first two or three

[1] Joel Aldrich Matteson, born August 2, 1808, at Watertown, New York; died January 31, 1873. Governor of Illinois, 1853-1857. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 12:410-11.

miles lay between the river and "bluff," a high bank of limestone rock, composed of flat layers from one inch to one foot thick, and affording a most inexhaustible supply of materials for building and fencing, but as yet little used for the latter. As I passed up a ravine through this bluff, and came out upon the high prairie, with the wind "dead ahead," and blowing most beautifully strong and cool, I almost wished myself again by my own warm hearth, and the enterprise that I have undertaken, committed to other hands, supported by a stronger constitution. Here, when the wind blew almost strong enough to start the hair off my horses, were situated several farms, miles away from timber, treeless, barnless, shedless and shelterless for cattle, which stood drawn up into the smallest possible dimensions, under the lee side of a rail fence, while the owner was perhaps complaining that "this is not a good country for cattle."

Passing a little grove, and less village, called Plainfield, on a stream called the Du Page, and upon which there are many fine farms, I struck out again upon the prairie, where I found a variety of what the people are pleased to call roads, none of which seemed to lead toward that point of compass that I thought I ought to go, and therefore I concluded that I would not follow either, and boldly struck off upon the trackless prairie just at sundown, for a four miles drive. Taking, as I have often done before, the wind for my guide, which unlike some friends at some other time, this time proved unchanging, and conducted me safely to my point, without accident, except a slight harness break, while performing that very common feat in this country, jumping a deep creek, before the era of roads and bridges.

After my cool ride, I met with a warm reception in the very comfortable cabin of Major Wm. Noble Davis, (Ausable-grove, Kendall county, Illinois,) whose farm is situated about 2 miles from that beautiful stream, the well known and oft described Fox river, and 40 miles from the great commercial point of all this country, Chicago.

The Major, (I insist upon giving him his rather questionable title, as he as well as every body else hereabouts, insist upon bestowing upon me the title of "Judge,") located upon this lovely spot about ten years ago, and by the purchase of an "Indian Reserve," secured about 500 acres of timber, that is now worth from $30 to $50 an acre. To this he has added about 1500 acres of as fine rolling prairie as fancy could wish, about 1100 acres of which is under substantial rail fences, mostly divided into lots of 80 acres each, all having suitable watering places for stock, which in the shape of horses, hogs, cattle and sheep, particularly the latter, abound in proportion to the size of the farm. Indeed, I believe he intends in time to make a sheep farm that will produce an amount of wool that will make some of the down east 100 acre farmers look with wonder, and wonder if such things can be. He has one little patch of Kentucky blue grass, of 160 acres. He has as yet but one barn, but that is a most noble one; but let me tell you, his cattle and sheep are not under the necessity of lashing themselves to the fence to keep from blowing away, for he has erected "cheap sheds" enough to shelter every hoof. He intends in the course of a couple of years more to get the remainder of his prairie under fence and in cultivation or seeded down to grass, and then with a well fenced 1500 acre farm—well what then do you think he intends to do? why, then he intends to *build a house and get married.* For be it known, and ye down east marriageable girls take notice, that this Illinois grandee is not yet a *very* old batchelor, only 36, fine looking, full of life, and as soon as he can get a nice, "snug little farm" ready, will also be ready to give you a call. But not till after "the new house advent." For be it known to his thousand and one eastern acquaintances, that he now lives in a log cabin that would be a rare show to some of his Broadway friends.

Major Davis has introduced some fine improved horses, cattle and sheep, the benefits to the country from which,

will be long felt by others as well as himself. He has also set an example in the way of fruit trees, well worthy to be followed. As I have so many individuals to notice, I cannot of course, spend too much time individualising stock and improvements.

On Saturday, I intended to have gone on my way rejoicing, but who ever escaped from the Major with only a one night visit, (he studied hospitality in a southern latitude,) and that, connected with a slight indisposition, brought on by the strong lime water of Juliet, not only kept me over Saturday, but there also I took a Sabbath's quiet rest.

On Saturday afternoon, the Major drove me up to Oswego, 2½ and Aurora, 7 miles, two flourishing villages on Fox river, at both of which the river, as well as at numerous other places, affords the best of water power, and at the latter is one of the best finished flour mills of 4 run of stone in the State.

Here we visited a picket fence making machine. The pickets are sawed by a circular saw, out of boards, and then passed through a set of cutters that round and sharpen them, and are put in girts also bored by a machine, and these lengths are set up crooked like worm fence, without posts, being held at the corners by one of the pickets passing through each girt, and as it is sold at 75 cents a rod, will answer well to fence prairie, where rails cannot be had for a less cost. But as it takes 14 rails to make a rod of as good fence, it is easy to calculate which kind of fence will be the cheapest. At present, while we cultivate so poorly, and do not average 10 bushels of wheat to the acre through a series of years, we cannot afford to pay 75 cents a rod for fencing, besides the cost of hauling and putting up, and then as most of us do, carelessly risk its being burnt by the annual fires that destroy thousands after thousands of rails every year.

Many of your Orange county readers will be interested to hear that I visited an old resident of that county, by

the name of Townsend, who with several of his children, live in the same grove with Major Davis, and own about 3,000 acres of fine land.[1] From Mr. Townsend I first learned that fowl meadow grass, which is one of the most valuable kinds that I am acquainted with for wet prairie, is indigenous to the country. By conversation with the old gentleman, I also became satisfied of what I had long believed, that what we call "blue grass," is a different article from what is known at the east by the same name. The eastern blue grass he thinks much the best. Neither of the kinds are profitable to cultivate for hay, but for fall and winter feed, particularly for sheep, exceedingly valuable.

I ought to have mentioned before, for the benefit of others who are beginning to make sheep farms, the manner which Major Davis constructs "cheap sheds"—two rows of posts about 15 feet apart are set up to sustain poles laid up in the same form of a log cabin roof, and small poles or brush laid on to sustain a covering of hay or straw, and the back side is completely filled with rails set up slanting and also covered, which not only makes a nearly tight roof, but a complete wind breaker, that will pay the cost in one winter. He fodders his sheep without racks. His method is this. The ground being well covered with straw, the sheep are driven into another yard, whilst the wagon, loaded with hay, is driven in the empty yard and the hay laid in rows. The sheep being now let in, commence taking their places without running over the hay or wasting more than when it is fed in racks or boxes, and none gets in the wool. I believe it promotes the health of sheep to allow them every pleasant day to have a range in the bushes. I have no doubt but that many who have driven sheep to this country during the

[1] Isaac Townsend, with his brother-in-law, Charles A. Davis, began purchasing land in this region in June, 1835. He invested heavily in a manufacturing enterprise consisting of a sawmill, furniture factory, wagon shop, and blacksmith shop. Letter of Mrs. Maude E. Henning, Little Rock Township Public Library, Plano, Illinois.

last summer, will find it a bad speculation before spring. It was the worst of seasons to drive, and drove sheep never get through the first winter without great care and some loss at best; while there are tens of thousands brought here without any kind of forethought of preparation for shelter or comfort, except what they may gather from a poor supply of prairie hay and such shelter as they can find under a rail fence, or upon the open wild waste. Such conduct is reprehensible, as not only cruel, but as a wicked waste of the lives of such valuable animals. This is a good sheep country I shall insist, until convinced by proof to the contrary; but they cannot live upon prairie wind, and sleep in knee deep prairie mud.

On Monday, I passed on my way down Fox river, crossing at a very poor county town of a very good county, on a very good bridge, but one that is only good in very cold weather, as I witnessed higher up the same stream last week, as it failed on a warm day, and let a pair of horses and wagon through; but by which I had an opportunity of witnessing the operation of getting a horse out of a hole in the ice, by drawing a rope tight round his neck until he chokes and floats to the top of the water. I stopped this night with an old farmer from Lycoming county, Pennsylvania, who had sold a comfortable "old homestead," and in his old age sought a "new home in the west;" and what do you think he has found? a fac simile of his mountain streams and clear springs, and tall trees and useful rocks? Oh no: he has got none of them. But he has bought 400 acres of land—rich land—200 of prairie, and 200 that is neither timber or prairie, plow land or meadow, but covered with a growth of small oaks, fit only for fire wood, while his rails must be hauled from 3 to 6 miles, and cost $2,50 or $3 a hundred.

The whole tract cost $3 an acre, 50 acres under improvement with poor buildings, destitute of water, and several attempts to get good well water, have failed at 70 feet deep. And for such a home as this, the "old homestead" was parted with. I mention this circumstance, to

show that emigrants do not always better their situation, when they leave substantial comfort in the east to pursue a vision of acquiring numberless acres of wild land in the west, however rich the soil of those acres may be.

Ten miles north of Ottawa, is "Indian creek," now occupied by a flourishing settlement, where, in 1832, the few inhabitants then there were the victims of the "Black Hawk war." Here is a body of good timber, which is the nearest timber to that town. The space between this settlement and Ottawa, being unoccupied prairie. Four miles above Ottawa, there is about 20 feet fall over a rocky bed of the Fox river, partially occupied by a sawmill and flouring mill of five run of stones, and a woolen manufactory of 4 satinet, and three broad looms, &c. As such manufacturing establishments are as yet so rare, although so much needed, I like to note all that come in my way. Here too, appears to be the northern boundary of the great coal field of Illinois. The abundance of coal that exists in the Illinois river valley is of immense importance, and more so on account of the scarcity of wood —coal at Ottawa is worth about 5c. a bushel, but it is not of first rate quality, being dug near the surface of the ground in the river bottom. By the bye, I wish you to notice that this phrase "river bottom," does not mean the bottom of the river, but what Eastern readers understand as "interval."

Ottawa is situated on the Illinois at the mouth of Fox river, and head of steam navigation in high water, and having been settled and built up during the canal fever, also contains many "hangers on," and from present appearances in the legislature, they are destined to hang on some time longer, before the canal is completed. And I would also here caution many of your down east readers, who have purchased land along the line of this canal at high prices under the expectancy of its early completion, that they are also "hanging on" to a very brittle prospect —and for my own part, until I see some vigorous measures taken to complete this important work, which when

done will relieve the state from one portion of her debt, I shall believe that she does not intend ever to pay any part of it. There is a Court House at Ottawa, built when the whole country were building castles *on credit*, at an expense of $36,000. As an evidence of very uncommon taste in this treeless country, I notice the yard set with shade trees. As usual in all western towns, where land was so dear and scarce, the streets are narrow and lots small. Even the principal hotel, to save room upon the surface of such valuable lots, has its dining room below. I attended a thinly attended scientific lecture at a neglected looking Mechanic's hall; at which I did not wonder, as all interest and conversation seems to be centered upon "canal! canal! canal!"

On the 8th of Jan. I ferried the Illinois in a most violent snow storm, and amid floating ice, being impelled to do so by the prospect that in an hour more all chance of crossing would be at an end, except upon the ice, which in several instances had already caused the loss of several teams this winter; and of the two dangers I chose the least and got safe over. But not so at an unbridged creek, three miles along the river road, where the ice gave way and gave me an upset into the water, mud and ice. That such a creek on such a road so near such a town, should remain for years unbridged is not singular, for whoever knew little works attended to where great ones, like this great canal, absorbed all minds. But for my consolation for my misfortune, I was assured that hundreds had met with worse ones at the same place. The great neglect of roads that manifests itself throughout this country, goes far towards creating a prejudice with strangers against any new country they are passing through.

I spent the night with a very intelligent farmer by the name of Baldwin, at "Farm ridge" on the Vermillion. Here is a settlement of Connecticut farmers, who have brought abundance of enterprise and industry with them, as is manifest by the appearance of good houses, barns

and orchards. The only thing lacking to make this lovely land very desirable, is timber which is here, as everywhere, too scarce. The Vermillion, however affords excellent mill sites, and abounds in coal of good quality. The coal is in three beds, the lower one in the bed of the stream. The banks are high bluffs of clay, coal and limestone. Vermillionville is one of those many towns in the west where people have learned by sad experience that they cannot live upon a little "7 by 9" town lot. Though many have moved out, there are some enterprising citizens left, one of whom is the new postmaster, Dr. Bullock.[1]

The nature of the soil along the Vermillion, is from 1 to 3 ft. black loam, then several feet clay, then sand, in which is found water. Natural curiosities in such a country are scarce, but near the mouth of the Vermillion are two—one, the "Deerpark," is a chasm in the rocks several hundred feet deep, a few rods in width and half a mile long, having an opening next the stream, into which deer used to wander after a "salt lick," and fall an easy prey to the Indians. The other is the celebrated "starved rock" on the Illinois, noted in history as the spot where a small tribe of Indians were driven by another tribe and besieged till starvation alone conquered the bravest of the red braves. From the Vermillion I passed over a dozen miles of beautiful country to Granville, a fine little town in Putnam co. beautified by a handsome church and a very excellent school. Spent the night with a Mr. Ware from Massachusetts,[2] who with his brother have set their neighbors an example in farming and improved stock worthy of imitation.

During this day's ride I passed a "long ditch" in the woods at Cedar point, which I was informed, was "the

[1] Dr. James T. Bullock came to Illinois in 1836, and was a successful physician at Vermillionville for forty years. He died in 1875. *History of La Salle County, Illinois . . .*, 2:103 (Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, 1886).

[2] Probably Ralph Ware, contributor from Granville to the agricultural reports of the Patent Office.

great Central Rail Road of Illinois," *that was* to lead from Galena, crossing the Illinois at the termination of the canal at Peru, to the great city of Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio. Six miles southeast of Granville, is "Mt. Palatine," a Baptist settlement and school, four miles out upon the wide prairie, solitary and alone, so far as regards timber.

Near Magnolia, which is a flourishing new town, 8 miles from the Illinois river, in which for the want of water power, steam is used, I spent a night with a Mr. Patterson from Pa.; and from his English shepherd, I learnt that he esteems bran slops, the best food for sheep dropping lambs in winter; and the condition of those on hand went far to prove it. As some criterion of the price of land in this vicinity, I learnt the sale of a 200 acre farm, about 80 improved, 60 timber and balance unenclosed prairie, with very moderate buildings for $2500 —the seller being bound for that new "Eldorado," of our restless population, the Oregon territory.

At Magnolia, I saw the first sugar maple; the timber northward being mostly oak. Upon Mr. Patterson's land, I also witnessed the astonishing increase of timber, when kept from fire—a matter not sufficiently thought of in this country—a country where tens of thousands of acres of rich soil can never be fenced except by growing the materials.

From Magnolia to Washington, I passed over some poor, uneven, barren, much uncultivated prairie, few and poor mill streams, through the very poor county town of Woodford co. (so named perhaps to indicate that the county is *not all* prairie) to the latter town, which lies about 10 miles east of Peoria, where I saw a large steam mill in operation, and a very extensive pork house, and other evidences of a prosperous state of things. Here after many days of beautiful winter weather, I encountered in the afternoon of January 11th, a furious snow storm with a head wind too strong to beat up against, which drove me into quarters with a homesick Kentuck-

ian, who was longing to return to his "own native land" —and here, after our rambling ride, my dear readers, we will rest until the morrow when you shall again "go ahead" with your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTES OF TRAVEL IN THE WEST—NO. II.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:124-26; Apr., 1845]

[Covering January 12-23, 1845]

MY DEAR READERS—The violent snow storm that drove us into quarters last night, like violence of all kinds, soon spent itself, and having given place to a clear cold day, seat yourselves by my side, and we will roll away to the south, and notwithstanding that the wind is "dead ahead," and blowing a fine fresh breeze, we shall beat up against it with ease, though not with so much comfort as you might desire. The first dozen miles, you may observe, after leaving the grove of fine timber on our right, is too level and "wettish" to be desirable. But here we come to the beautiful village of Tremont, (the county seat of Tazewell,) with its handsome courthouse and church; but what interests us more, is to see that the sons of New-England, who settled and still flourish here, so far departed from the fashion of this country, that they have given wide streets and large building lots, many of the occupants of which have still farther departed from fashion, as we can plainly see by the multitude of shade and fruit trees that surround and beautify their dwellings. We will not call, though tempting signs hang out, for we are told that notwithstanding the beauty of the place, old King Alcohol, here holds undisputed sway. If this, "an o'er true tale" should be, I hope the Tremontonians will rouse themselves to break the tyrant's rule.

In the valley of a stream called Mackinaw, that winds through broken sandy hills of stunted timber growth, we witness the first marks of that great flood that desolated

thousands of western acres. The little cabin is alone standing; all else is swept away. As we rise again upon the 25 mile wide prairie, which our road lies across, we see five miles ahead, a most enormous frame house, which was built, (all but putting together,) in Rhode Island, and now stands a monument of a bad speculation, towering its three or four stories far above the half dozen little tenements below, that rise from the town of Delavan, a name that sounds familiar in the ears of all teetotalers.[1]

This town was projected for a "colony;" whether it was a part of the project that the colonists should live without wood, I am not informed, but certes there is but little in sight, and that little far away to the west, while eastward lies untold miles of prairie, and southward along our road a long 12 miles will bring us to an only house, with just about timber enough to fill an old fashion New-England fire-place, but for eight miles more, there is no one to claim a share of this poor pittance of fuel or interfere with this ocean of prairie. To day we cross several creeks that would be good mill-streams, but unfortunately there is neither fall or good banks. The bridges are dilapidated by the high water and natural quick decay of timber in a damp climate, and the roads such as nature made them, with but little labor from this non-road-working community. The night we'll spend at what is somewhat rare, a comfortable country inn, at a small specimen of a village called Middletown, so called

[1] In 1833 an association was formed in Providence, Rhode Island, for the purpose of establishing a temperance colony in the West. Three years later the company issued stock to the amount of $25,000 and appointed a committee to lay out a town on the Illinois prairies, which was named for Edward Cornelius Delavan, of Albany, New York, reformer and publisher of temperance journals. Holdings (160-acre farm and town lot 300 feet square) were sold at auction in Providence. The Delavan House, mentioned by Robinson, was the first building erected, and there William Crossman, agent for the company, settled with his family in October, 1837. The Delavan House became important as a hotel for stage passengers from Springfield to Peoria. Letter from Ayer Public Library, Delavan.

perhaps because like many others, it is in the middle of a middling sized prairie, 20 miles north of Springfield, the capitol of the Sucker State. From whatever cause this name for the State originated, I doubt not that many who have been "suck'd in" by the private speculations of individuals, as well as by the wild projects of internal improvement that have suck'd in so many millions of dollars, will think the name an appropriate one.

Indications of a change of soil are visible to day. The timber is such as is commonly found on the alluvial bottom lands of the west. Maple, elm, black-walnut, ash and buckeye, interspersed with oak, the prevailing timber further north. And a still greater indication shows by the absence of barns and other "yankee fixings," that show the yankee thrift of character, that a population of corn-growing, hog-feeding, corn-bread and bacon-eating southerners are in the majority in this latitude. Our eastern built carriage, with two wheels in the rut upon one side, while the other two are jolting upon a rough ridge, tells us that we are in a country of "wide track wagons," driven with the "single line" as we see, by a teamster seated upon one of the horses. And why should it be different? Did not their father's so drive before them!!

In the bluff of the Sangamon river, (5 miles from Springfield,) which is here a good mill stream, and so used, where it has been dug out to form a road to a fine new bridge, we see the rock in every state of formation, between soft clay and hard limestone. From the river to near the town, the road lies over a tract of very poor sandy hills, full of gulleys and covered with brush, that probably never will again be worth as much money as it was valued at a few years ago, when Springfield was "going to be" a London or Pekin, in the eyes of men, that in counting dollars, discarded all figures below millions.

Now, on this 12th day of January, 1845, at Springfield, the capital of the State of Illinois, it is a mild sunny day, more like May than midwinter, and a drouth prevailing

like midsummer. In fact, it was so dry last fall, that not half the seed sown grew, and many of the wheat fields look as bare as naked fallow. Whether it will grow in spring, is yet to be proven. My opinion is, that it would be good policy to sow it now with a seeding of spring wheat. Many of the corn-fields that I have passed, bear ready evidence of the prevailing rains of the spring and early part of summer. In some of the fields, on flat prairie, the crop was not worth gathering, while in others of drier soil or more rolling land, the crop was a good one for this country of untold richness of soil, say 30 bushels to the acre; and even that in many instances we see still in the field, for such is western farming.

Now curiosity may perhaps inquire for a description of this capitol. If I give one, it must be of briefer space than the scattering town of 3 or 4,000 inhabitants, who mostly occupy poor buildings, upon small, dirty, treeless, grassless, gardenless lots, upon long unpaved level streets, which are never very muddy, unless more than knee deep; which it is not improbable they should be, as the town is upon a wide plain of soft loamy soil, with no outlet for accumulating water, unless sent off "by the rail-road," which is so thoroughly out of repair at this time, that that would prove a poor sewer, except of the people's pockets.

This rail-road, from hence to Meradosia (65 miles) on the Illinois river, is another of the links of that endless chain that was to bind the State in love together, but has bound them in debt forever. It is already so dilapidated that mules have been substituted for locomotives, and as it fails to pay expenses, it must shortly go out of use for want of repair.

Another monument of by-gone Illinois riches, is the unfinished ill constructed State-house, built of cut stone, of a hard sandy limestone quality, at an expense of a quarter of a million of dollars. It is 80 by 120 feet, of two extremely high stories above the basement, (which is useless on account of dampness;) and contains a hall for

the 120 members that represent the 99 counties of the State, a Senate of 41 members, and a Supreme Court of 9 judges, which by some is thought to be supremely ridiculous; a very large library room with very few books, except Illinois lows, and office rooms for Secretary and Treasurer of an empty treasury, but is almost totally lacking in what is most wanted, rooms for committees. The masses of stone and half finished columns that lie around, the unhung doors and unplastered rooms, show that the work was suddenly checked at a point that shows the whole work was done upon "borrowed capital."

Of the members of the house I shall say nothing, except to beg you as you look upon and listen to them, not to consider them as a body, although large, a fair sample of the moral worth and intelligence of the inhabitants of the State. The appearance of the Senatorial body is highly respectable, and is presided over by one of the best presiding officers I ever saw; Col. Mattison, a Senator from Juliet, whose woolen factory I mentioned, I met with here, and owe to him my warmest thanks for every effort in his power extended cordially to me to further the object of my mission. I also was treated with great respect by many other Senators and representatives, who seemed fully to appreciate the benefits that would accrue to the agricultural community, if they could be induced to read good agricultural papers, and to talk, think and act upon the business of their every day life. I spent three days amid this congregated wisdom of Illinois, from which I hope some good may arise; and should have held a public meeting to talk to the few farmers in the Legislature, but I found that self-interest, party tactics, and Mormonism,[1] so completely absorbed every other interest, that such plain common sense matter as improvement in agricultural pursuits, had no possible chance in such

[1] The Mormons were driven out of Missouri in 1838. In 1839 they established themselves at the site of Nauvoo, Illinois, and secured a charter from the legislature. This charter was repealed by the legislature of 1845 and the next year the Mormons were forced to leave the state. See Pease, *The Frontier State*, 340-62.

an excited community. Our friend Wright of the Prairie Farmer, was also at Springfield, engaged in a noble effort to get an improvement in the present very defective common school law of Illinois. An uphill business—reminds me something about casting pearls before a certain kind of animals.

There are a few good buildings in the "city," one of which is the defunct State bank, built of the same material as the State House, from a quarry about 8 miles distant—also a stone church. There is a large plow manufactory here, which makes about 2,000 a year, with wrought iron mould-boards, which are not equal however to those made wholly of steel at Chicago. There are two furnaces for small castings, that use iron from Tennessee, and coal to melt it with from Philadelphia; the coal of Illinois, which is abundant within a few miles, not being fit for that purpose.

This is an old and rich country, with good soil and timber, yet there is a great deal of uncultivated land. There are some orchards, but as the country has not been settled more than 20 or 25 years, people must be excused for not having fruit, as it takes a great many years to get that, when there are no trees set out.

As an evidence of the rapid growth of timber, I was told of one 80 acre lot that was cut off nine years ago, and will now afford fifteen cords to the acre, mostly oak. This kind of wood is worth about $1,25 a cord in Springfield. Wheat here, as well as all along the road from Ottawa, is worth about 50 cts., corn 20 cts., oats 15 cts. And every where through this part of the State, there is one universal cry of no money, and very poor crops for two years past, which I can readily believe, and will also add that they will be so for two years to come; for no system of farming like that almost universally followed here, will ever afford the farmer good crops. Although he may raise a great many bushels of corn, and keep a great many poor hogs, horses and cattle to eat it all up in the winter, which they must do for lack of any other

kind of feed, he will still cry "no money;" and still go on in the same way, for he will not inform himself of a better system. His rotation of crops is corn, weeds, hogs, mud and corn. His reading, if indeed he happen to be one who reads at all, consists of a very brief insight of one book, and one well con'd paper of the one party in whom he places all faith. In such a community, better informed men are out of place, and all their innovations looked upon with jealousy, and their better success from better management, with envy.

On the morning of Jan. 16th, I intended to leave Springfield, but was detained by a thunder shower till evening, when I drove out on the St. Louis road over wet, uncultivated prairie, 5 miles to "Lick creek timber," an excellent body of good land, good farms and fine timber.

Notwithstanding this is an old county, that is old for this young country, there is an abundance of uncultivated land, and that too within gun shot of the capital. On most of the creeks and ravines, coal is found in abundance. The streams through this part of the State are sunk in deep hollows, and run between high, steep, muddy banks.

At a poor deserted looking village called Auburn, I met with a rare sight—an actual live nursery of well assorted fruit trees, cultivated by the Rev. Wm C. Greenleaf, a very worthy Presbyterian minister, whose talents not being appreciated sufficiently to support his declining years, has turned his well cultivated mind to the cultivation of trees, and for which he finds more persons willing to pay, than he does for preaching, which they prefer to have of a cheaper quality. Mr. G. is trying a hedge of native thorn; and will give the result when ascertained. Like all well educated gentlemen of his profession, he takes an active interest in agricultural improvement, and uses his influence to extend the circulation of agricultural papers. By his advice, I called upon one of his neighbors, upon a farm upon which he keeps 100 head of cattle, and a "right smart chance" of hogs, but they are

dying with the kidney worm, and he made a "bad crap; it was so powerful wet in the spring that the crap got right smartly in the grass! and then again it got dreadful dry," and so with all these misfortunes, he felt too poor to subscribe for a paper. I hinted that if he had taken one, he would have found a receipt to cure the kidney worm, and thus have saved fifty dollars worth of hogs. But "he reckoned these ere papers told a heap of lies;" and so to save the poor man's conscience as well as hogs, I told him to give the latter sulphur, which if I had given him the medicine as well as advice, perhaps he would have done.

After leaving this fair specimen of a large majority of the settlers of this country, I entered just at sundown, upon a 20 mile prairie, intending to drive five miles to the first and only house, and spend the night; but as I approached, one unacquainted with such scenes, might have fancied that instead of a country tavern, he was nearing an army encampment; as it required no great stretch of fancy to convert a score of white wagon covers into tents, and the noise of a dozen families of emigrants, into that of a small detachment of "la grand armie." Indeed, such scenes in the west are by no means uncommon. There is one of the roads that enter Chicago, upon which I have seen 300 wagons pass in a day, and that not a rare sight, but one often seen.

Finding in the present case, that if I remained I must content myself with a very small portion of a bed, and my horses with a birth by the side of a rail fence, I soon concluded to "put out" and brave the terrors of a threatening snow storm upon a prairie 15 miles across, as upon the other side lay the town of Carlinsville, the seat of justice in Macoupin county. I am of opinion that if that fellow who is astonishing the "down easters," fiddling the "solitude of the prairie," had been with me this evening, that he would have been able to play the tune in much greater perfection. Perhaps he might add,

"Oh solitude, where are the charms
That emigrants see in this place;
Better stay on their own little farms,
Than own all this horrible waste."

And he might add another stanza to a lone tree standing solitary and alone in the midst of this ocean of land, like a sentinel watching alone over the solitude of the prairie, which is more profound than the solitude of the darkest forest.

No doubt many of my eastern readers would have hesitated long, and rather put up with lodging "three in a bed," sooner than undertake the passage of such a prairie in the night. But we soon get used to it, and as in the present instance, get through it in good order, and by contrast are able to reap double enjoyment by the side of a good fire in a good inn. The town of Carlinsville, like many others in the west that grew up like Jonah's gourd, when men forsook the cultivation of the soil to grow suddenly rich in town lot speculation, now shows in the dilapidated appearance of tenantless houses, that it would have been better for many if they had been content to pursue a steady, though slow, yet certain road to comfortable independence which surely attends the careful cultivation of a good soil.

During this day's drive, after leaving Carlinsville, I witnessed the rapid increase of timber that is every where taking place in the prairie country, where protected from fire. Though during the past fall, in consequence of the great drouth that followed the great flood, immense damage, not only to the young timber, but in the destruction of fences, has been done throughout the whole of my journey. And this drouth still continues, so much so that the few mills that are to be found in this part of the State, are almost useless, and settlers complain of "long trips to mill." The roads, even in the beds of streams that are sometimes impassible, (where bridges are not, and that is every where when it is possible to "get along" without them,) are

dusty, and the land in fine order for plowing, though I perceive but little of it doing. And would you know why? Why, is it not winter? And who ever heard of plowing in the winter, in a country where we are above such vulgar business as working when we are not obliged to. And another reason is that most of the cultivated land is every year in corn, and much of that is not yet gathered, and besides the stalk fields are the main dependance of half the farmers in the country for wintering the stock. And under such circumstances, notwithstanding the favorable nature of the weather for plowing, if they even had a disposition to do it, they cannot avail themselves of the opportunity. But you will say they might be otherwise employed; getting up wood for instance. Beg pardon, but you don't know "our folks,"—they are waiting for sledding.

But there are many exceptions to this waiting kind of population, one of which I witnessed at Chesterfield in this county of Macoupin. There were not only orchards and barns, but beautiful groves of locust around the comfortable houses, at one of which I found a dairy of 70 cows; and at almost every house a file of the Cultivator or Prairie Farmer, a paper in high credit in this State. And reader, where do you think this intelligent and enterprising population were from: I shall not tell, but if you are a yankee, you can easily "guess." I found one of them busily engaged building a new barn, which he assured me he was incited to by reading my remarks upon the subject of the want of this indispensible farm building in the west. I hope my remarks, and the contrast that I shall exhibit to them between good and bad farmers, that I meet with upon my present tour, will also excite many others to make improvements.

And here is one example by way of contrast—I spent the night in the cabin of one who had become familiar with my name in the Cultivator, and felt great pleasure in extending a warm welcome to the best he had, to one he had long looked upon as an old acquaintance and

friend. He is a physician, whose practice required him to keep two horses, and where do you think he kept them during the inclemency of a wintry storm? In the stable, do you say. Well, it was in a large one, then, which nature alone had any hand in building. For no other had he, and therefore in the morning, I had no scruples of conscience against bringing my horses out of the corner of the fence where they had spent the night, and hitching on to the carriage for a 14 mile drive over a bleak prairie, facing a south-east snow storm, to a little town in the same county called Woodburn, where I spent the balance of the Sabbath in very comfortable quarters for both man and beast. Now, I shall not mention the name of this really good man, though to us he has an odd way of showing his goodness to the good creatures created for his use, but that is all owing to his "brought'n up" in a section of the United States that "I reckon" you will not wish me to tell you lies south of that celebrated line of Mason and Dixon.

I found my host, (Dr. Grimsted,) a very intelligent Englishman, who, together with many of his countrymen of the same stamp, have settled in and about this place, which is located upon good prairie, scarce of timber, inconvenient to mills, and possesses rather too great a share of that kind of "go-day, come-day" population, which fill the southern part of Illinois with a class of men that are content to live not only without stables, but without many of the other comforts that constantly surround the cabin of the eastern emigrant; the contrast between which and their own, will do more to urge them forward to do likewise, than all the agricultural papers in the world; for them they never read.[1]

Three miles from Woodburn, is the village or rather settlement of "Bunker hill;" where I found a monument

[1] This rather uncomplimentary description of Woodburn provoked a defense from the postmaster, Jonathan Huggins. See *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:205 (July, 1845). Robinson wrote a somewhat similar article to the *Prairie Farmer* (5:68-69, March, 1845) which also brought forth a contradiction (5:82-83, April, 1845).

as noble and enduring as that which overlooks the city of Boston. It is a monument of industry, enterprise and yankee perseverance that has within a few short years converted a wide tract of rich rolling prairie, although not very convenient to timber or mills, into one of the most flourishing communities and highly improved farms that I have seen in the State. The location is undoubtedly a healthy one, well water convenient and good, but stock water upon the surface, I judge not so. There is more grass, more fruit trees, more barns, more good houses, more scholars at school, and more readers of agricultural papers in this eight year old settlement, than there is in some of the oldest settlements in the State, where the population is double.

I took dinner with Moses True,[1] who is a worthy follower of his great namesake, in regard to perseverance, and whom I wish I could induce some thousands of his fellow-citizens to take as a pattern of the TRUE way to acquire a comfortable independence in the cultivation of the soil. He showed me a flock of 200 wedder sheep fattening for the St. Louis market, 40 miles distant. He intends fattening about this number every year, as he finds it one of the most profitable of his farming operations. His flock consists of about 800 at this time. I have also noticed several other flocks to-day, and also a disease called the sore mouth, which is affecting several flocks. If you will publish a cure if known, it will oblige many in this part of the country. In the course of a two hours drive after leaving this place, where every thing looked as though created but yesterday, one might suppose that he had indulged in an unconscious nap, and awaked in "the old settlemeets," so great is the change. For here we are amid old buildings, old farms and

[1]Moses True arrived at the site of Bunker Hill, Illinois, on Christmas Day, 1835. It was then a wild prairie. In January, 1836, he opened the first store in Bunker Hill; his cabin was the first hotel in the town. See Walker, Charles A. (ed.), *History of Macoupin County, Illinois*, 1:105 (S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1911).

orchards of old trees, one of which, containing 1200 bearing trees, (owned by Gershom Flagg,[1] Esq., brother of your Comptroller of State,) upon a large and excellent farm in Madison county, 30 miles from St. Louis, where he has resided 27 years, 25 of which in the same log cabins, which are his castles still, and in which I met a kind of welcome not to be measured by outside appearances. He has about 500 acres in cultivation, and is still adding more; and keeps about 100 head of cattle, with horses and hogs to match. His orchard of excellent grafted fruit brings him in some $2,000 a year, most of the fruit of which he sends to New-Orleans. He keeps 10 or 15 yokes of steers at work, which, as soon as he gets well broke, are offered for sale, and bring remunerating prices. He is reputed so, and is undoubtedly rich, and I will also add, proud. But it is proud of living so long in a house that has been of so little expense to him. All of his out-buildings, and they are very extensive and convenient, are of the same primitive description. Indeed, he says that he has never used a brick or shingle upon the place, but if I may judge from appearances, he is now preparing to do so shortly. He is not waiting for sledding. Every thing around him is on the go-ahead principle, except the house, and that is going to decay. And when we look abroad over the towns, cities and farms extending hundreds of miles away to the north, and think that this very house when built, was the "frontier settlement," the very outpost of civilization, it is easy to imagine that it is time for it to pass away. At the time Mr. Flagg settled here, he was looked upon by his neighbors in the "thick woods," as little better than a crazy man to undertake to cultivate the prairie, when it was evident it would not produce crops, otherwise it would have produced timber.

[1] Gershom Flagg, Madison County, Illinois. Pioneer settler and farmer. Contributor to *Prairie Farmer*. His "Pioneer Letters," edited with introduction and notes by Solon J. Buck, are printed in Illinois State Historical Society *Transactions*, 1910, pp. 139-63 (Springfield, 1912).

Over a rough uncultivated tract, mostly timbered, I went to the somewhat famous town of Alton, or rather towns, for there are three of them, Upper, Middle and Lower; and all covering as rough and uneven a surface, extending up mountain sides, and back a mile or more over other mountain sides, from the river, that part being Upper Alton. Here is the college, several good churches and fine dwellings, but no mercantile business. Middle town is a collection of good dwellings, mostly occupied by men doing business in the lower town. Here I noticed a dwelling surrounded with a garden in high cultivation, a plain indication of the owner's mind, who I found on acquaintance, though engaged in other pursuits, highly interested in agricultural improvement, and whose name, Moses G. Atwood,[1] will call to the mind of Mr. Tucker, reminiscences of the days when they were both sticking type away down in New-Hampshire.

At the lower town is the Illinois penitentiary, several fine churches, one busy business street—there is no room for a second one—and a tavern, the Franklin House, that is worthy of patronage. From Alton to St. Louis is 25 miles, down the far famed American bottom—an immense tract of land that was covered, and in some places greatly injured, by the great flood. But it never was under that kind of a state of cultivation which would satisfy any man who had an aspiration above a "hog and hominy" kind of existence, and was willing to have the "shakes" half the year, for permission even to enjoy that much. I believe I met with a fair sample of half of the inhabitants, in an individual who had lived upon the same farm 40 years, and has not an acre of grass or fruit tree in the world, but can brag of raising more and bigger corn than all the rest of creation, "Old Kaintuck" included.

I asked him why he did not raise grass? "Well, he did sometimes think on't—and he tried it about 30 years ago,

[1] Moses G. Atwood, born April 14, 1785, at Woodbury, Connecticut; died February 5, 1867. Breeder of Merino sheep.

but it did'nt do well." And why don't you set an orchard? "Well, I reckon may be I will some day—did set out a few trees once, and they grew powerfully, but the cattle soon destroyed 'em." And no wonder, for they were set in "the big field," the eternal corn field. Fences are much swept away, and probably the barns with them, for they are not to be seen now, although the little old miserable dwellings, like the owners, hang on. The land in many places is much grown over with bushes, mostly crab-apple, which abound by the million. The bottom is nine miles wide, and is bounded on the east by a very high clay bluff, that bears evident marks high up its face, that here once run a mighty current. There are also many mounds upon the bottom that show the same appearance, and that the stream gradually wore down this immense mass of clay to the present level.

During the flood, the ferry was nine miles wide; now less than a ninth of that, which I crossed upon the 22d of January, 1845, on a steam ferry boat, and upon a beautiful sunny day as we need wish for in May. The two boats at this ferry are almost constantly crowded with produce and market wagons from 60 or 70 miles back in Illinois, coming to St. Louis. The old part of this city was built upon an abrupt rocky bank, and in addition to its outward wall, many of the old Spanish houses were separately walled in like a strong fortification. Some vestiges of these, and the old Spanish houses, still remain, but are fast giving way to the spirit of improvement, every where visible. But the town suffers one monstrous inconvenience in the narrowness of the streets. Some of the main business streets being barely wide enough to allow two wagons to pass. It is a place of immense businesss, constantly on the increase. The lead and fur traders alone employing great capital, and a vast agricultural country above, that draws its supplies through this place, create a vast trade.

The land around the city is not under good improvement; which is probably owing to the want of good title:

much of it being an old Spanish grant for a public common. All the land between the city and Jefferson Barracks, and even below, is in the same condition, being claimed as a common of the town of Carondalet, a little miserable collection of old Spanish or older French houses, a few miles below St. Louis, and is one of the oldest French towns in the west. This common land remains unsettled, and the timber having been cut off, is now grown up to bushes; and in the vicinity of such a city has a very unsightly appearance. Jefferson Barracks, by the expenditure of a few wagon loads of Uncle Sam's money, has been made a beautiful spot amid this wilderness of Spanish spoliation and French frivolity, both of which classes had rather live on frogs and tobacco, and spend their time in drinking and dancing, than in growing rich by the cultivation of the earth.

The old Spanish and French citizens in St. Louis, for a long time successfully resisted the spirit of improvement that pulls down to build up; and the old grants of land to this class of citizens, some of which are still unsettled, have been a great detriment to the improvement of this part of the State of Missouri.

From St. Louis to the Merrimac river, 18 miles, the road lies over a succession of clayey hills, and for 14 miles after leaving the city, scarcely any improvements, and them but poor. Soon after crossing this stream, we begin to enter the great mining district of Missouri, and find ourselves climbing rocky mountain sides, picking our way along some mountain stream that winds between high precipices of perpendicular rock. Oh what a change. What a contrast from the boundless and comparatively level prairie, where the eye found no limit but the horizon, to this pent up prison of rocky grandeur.

The prairie land behind me lies,
  That boundless realm of grass and hay.
The mountain rocks before me rise,
  With nought to cheer my toilsome way.

Yes, I have something to cheer me on my way; and that is, that what I see and take note of, may give pleasure to those, who in imagination, accompany on his tour, their old friend,

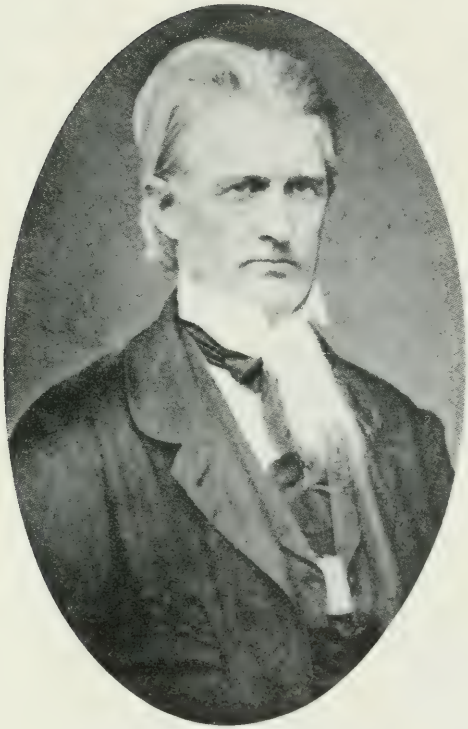
SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTES OF TRAVEL IN THE WEST—No. III.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:142-43; May, 1845]

[Covering January 24-28, 1845]

At the close of my last communication, I think we had just begun to get among the mineral hills of Missouri. And what can we find in this rugged, uncultivated, and almost uncultivatable district, to interest the readers of an agricultural paper, when the only staple is that same heavy commodity with which guns and brains are sometimes alike loaded? I have to hope that my present leaden article, may not be thought to emanate from a brain overfilled with that substance, or that I shall infuse such a quantity of the arsenical vapor that arises from the smelting furnaces, into this letter, that I shall kill off my friends who have traveled with me thus far. But we must proceed. These rocky hills and mountain sides have to be climbed, before we can reach that rich and sunny southern clime where we hope to find more matter of a practical kind to interest the agricultural reader. I wish I had been favored with that branch of education that ought to be taught in all schools, and I would give you here an interesting view of an "old Spanish house" that I passed this day, January 24th. There are many of these old houses yet to be seen in this country, but they are fast disappearing. This one was only different from many others, that it must have belonged to one of the aristocracy of olden times. It was perhaps an hundred and fifty feet long, one story high, elevated upon high stone pillars, a wide portico the whole length, under which were the several entrances to the different apartments; that into the center hall, being fitted with very wide, massive paneled doors, the windows small,



Solon Robinson, 1845

roof steep and ornamented by three high peaked projections or turrets, in the face of which were small windows or loop-holes, that look as though designed to reconnoitre for savage foes that might be lurking in the romantic valley of this location. The vallies of this region are all fertile, and ever will continue to be, while the limestone hills continue to disintegrate and send down the best of manure. Col. Snowden, a gentleman whom I met with to-day upon one of these rich bottom farms, tells me that he raises as fine hemp as he ever raised in Kentucky. I also was informed by Dr. Cooley, (with whom I dined,) another gentleman in the same valley, who lives upon an "old grant," that the long and continued cropping of this land had no perceptible effect upon it. In buying an "old grant," a man has a great advantage over one who enters land surveyed by the United States, because the old settlers having no rigid rules to confine them to straight lines, have run them in all kinds of curious angles so as to make up the amount of their claim entirely of the best lands contiguous.

At Hillsboro, the County seat of Jefferson county, I very unexpectedly met with a warm friend of agricultural improvement, who not only reads himself, but induces others to subscribe for such papers; and yet this man is not a cultivator himself, but as is often the case, is a much more efficient friend of every thing that tends to improve the condition of that class than they themselves are. The reason is soon told. *He reads*—and what is all important, he knows just enough to know that he yet can learn more. The most difficult class to contend with, being those that already know so much that they cannot be taught any more. This gentleman, John S. Matthews, Esq. clerk of the county, has a very fine cabinet of minerals, nearly all of which he has collected himself. It was here that I saw some beautiful specimens of shell marble, quantities of which exist in the neighboring hills, and which might be profitably worked. He also showed me some specimens of cannel coal of excel-

lent quality, from the Osage river, where it has lately been discovered, and will prove of great value to the prairie region of the west, it being much lighter for transportation, and answering in the place of charcoal for mechanical purposes.

Mr. Matthews informs me that the oak ridges of this country, which are at present but little cultivated, are very fertile, and the north sides invariably the most so; and that they produce as great a burthen of blue grass as any land that he is acquainted with. Here then is another "good country for sheep." Yet none are here, for no one has money to buy sheep in a country where silver turns to lead; and often stays turned. For although fortunes are sometimes made by mining, yet taken as a class, the miners are not as well off in the world, as those who follow the slow and sure road to comfortable independence in the cultivation of the earth. Jan. 25th, I visited one of the largest mining establishments in this part of the State, and at present yielding probably the most lead for the amount of labor employed, of any one in the United States. It is known as the "Mammoth Diggings," and is situated in Jefferson county, 55 miles south-west of St Louis. The method of hunting for mineral is this: a man goes upon any land where the external appearances indicate mineral; in fact it is often found in small quantities upon the surface, and commences "prospecting," that is, digging holes 3 or 4 feet in diameter, and more or less deep as the prospect induces, and if he discovers lead, then he goes on "proving" until he finds whether it is worth following, or till the lead give out. The whole country is full of these prospect holes, some of which prove barren, and in others, the miner discovers mineral enough to pay him for his labor, but the "prospect is too poor" to induce him to penetrate into the solid rock below the earth and loose stones near the surface, and he abandons that spot and goes to another, in the hope of eventually making a "discovery," which will lead to quick and certain fortune.

But in this, as I will soon illustrate, as in agriculture, it often happens that a steady and untiring perseverance in the "old diggings," continually turning up the earth a little deeper, would lead to more certain fortune than an abandonment of the old and familiar ground, for a new beginning upon an untried soil, when like the desperate gambler, we place all upon the cast of a single die. At this "Mammoth Digging," some poor fellow about 15 years ago, was within a foot of his fortune; but he was a surface skimmer, and knew not the value of subsoiling; and so he missed the crop that since has been made. But to explain. Some 18 months since, a boy in the neighborhood, who was out "prospecting" among the rugged hills, begun digging out one of these old holes, and in a little time discovered the "blow out" of the mine beneath. This lead being followed up, and the earth and rocks removed a few feet further, opened into a cave lined all around the sides and arch with immense masses of ore, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds, and so pure that it yielded 75 to 80 per cent of pure lead. And here again is a lesson to encourage perseverance; for after this cave was exhausted, the work was suspended for some time, till at length a small lead was discovered, that lead into a second cave of equal size and richness, and from that to a third one still better, and when I visited the diggins, a single blast of powder had thrown open a passage into a fourth cave which by some, was supposed to contain 200,000 pounds, but I think that amount may be divided by two, which still leaves an immense mass to be exposed to one view. The opening of the cave is in the side of a hill, and the descent so gradual, that the ore is brought to the surface in wheel barrows, where it is cleared of the adhering rock, called by the miners "tiff," a white metallic substance which I am unable to name correctly. It is probably a corruption of tufa. It is then hauled to the furnace, where the operation of smelting has been so simplified within a few years, that I believe I can "tote" fuel enough to melt a thousand

pounds of lead. The fuel is dry cedar chips and charcoal, which is mixed with the broken mineral in a furnace holding a bushel or two, and the fire kept in blast by a blow-pipe, driven by a steam engine. In other locations, water power is used. The extent this digging has penetrated into the hill, is about 200 feet, and there is no telling how long they will continue to discover other caves. At other diggings, caves have been found in larger numbers, but lesser size, and much further from the surface.

Some diggings are dry, others so wet as to require a steam engine to pump out the water. Large quantities of mineral have been found in different places in "clay diggins" near the surface. This mineral clay is almost red, very unctuous and very productive. The ore in the clay is in detached cubular masses. In the caves, in globular form—in the rocks, in sheets, varying from the thickness of this paper, to two feet, and these veins are sometimes followed down into the rocks by blasting an hundred feet deep, always with the exciting hope of finding a mass. Many of these mines have been worked for a long time. Those at a place called "old mines," for forty years, by the French residents who still occupy the place, and from the appearance, in the same log cabins they did at first. But those at "Riviere La Motte" in Madison county, are the oldest, there being still an unsettled claim upon the tract, by the heirs of Rino,[1] a Frenchman, who was here in the employ of the king of France in 1723, but as is now supposed, looking for silver instead of lead. There is a large amount of business done at these mines by a poor looking population who work without the hope that animates the class in other places, as here they are all tenants, and have to give the proprietors of the tract of land, which is I believe 3 miles by 6, one-tenth of all their earnings. There is now here ten smelting furnaces for lead, and one or two for copper are building. Cobalt, nickel, and manganese ores are

[1] Philippe François Renault.

also found here. The south-western part of Missouri is rich in mineral wealth, but shows few examples of agricultural wealth; and the mining population are of that class that every thing that comes light goes lighter, and they live to day, and live poor too, with no thought of the morrow. Now although money may be sometimes easier made by mining than farming, it is an uncertain business, and does not seem to produce so good a state of society as that old fashioned mode of making a good living at least, in the cultivation of the earth. But the business withdraws an immense amount of labor from cultivation, and profitably employs a large amount of capital, and furnishes a market for all the surplus produce of the few farms in the mining region. I must not forget to mention one of this class who I found in the vicinity of the Mammoth Diggings, Willard Frissell, Esq. whose rich and well cultivated farm has enabled him to live free from the temptation of mining some of the rich mineral hills which skirt the fine bottom land that he has in cultivation. Having long been a reader of the Cultivator, I found myself warmly welcomed as an old acquaintance, and rested with him over a lovely sunny day, the last Sabbath in this month. But I have to charge this man, and I doubt not the charge will fit many other readers, with a failure to profit by what he has read. His only water is "toted" up a long steep hill to the house from a spring at the foot, when right by the side of that spring runs a stream of water, that if applied as directed by Mr. Bement, would bring a constant supply from the spring to the house and as "time is money," would save enough every year to pay the expense. Reader—I mean you, don't apply it to your neighbor—have you profited by what you have read, any better? If not, now is the right time to do so. If you have no spring to make run up hill; I'll bet a bucket of cool water you have a well as hard as lime can make it, and no cistern to make your wife look so good natured "wash day."

Jan. 27th. A warm spring-like rain detained me nearly all the forenoon. This is the first "sprinkle" since I left home, which proved rather a hard one in the course of the day; for lured by false appearances, I undertook to drive a dozen miles over a road that the very thoughts of is enough to make the bones ache, of one who is accustomed only to the smooth prairie roads. But patience and perseverance accomplished the task and before the next morning, the rain turned to snow, and for the first time this winter, coated all nature in a white mantle about two inches deep, that soon melted in the morning sun, making as fine a compound of snow and mud and water as ever was mixed together. At Old mines, I saw as fine a young apple orchard as ever grew, proving what might have been proved long before, that the country is well adapted to raising fruit as well as lead. The owner also showed me the benefits of manure as well as lime, upon this limestone soil. By the use of lime, the finest crops of grass can be raised, and many of the hill sides could be set with fruit trees, that are unfit for cultivation.

Potosi is the county seat of Washington county, built of course like all other towns, upon seven hills; for here there is not level ground enough to build scarcely one house, much more a town upon. At this place I was shown a well dug through a bed of lead ore, and was assured that this mineral never injures the water, all of which must come more or less in contact with it. Near Potosi, I visited the farm of John Evans, a good English farmer, who has proved that fruit trees, grass and sheep, will flourish in this part of Missouri, if they can have a chance. At a Frenchman's where I staid over night, I learned a new way to build a barn in a country where saw mills are few and very far between, as is the case here. I will describe it for the benefit of new settlers in general, and some folks in particular.

A row of cedar posts, being first grooved on each side, are set in the ground about five feet apart, and in these

grooves are fitted puncheons of any convenient width, the edges resting upon each other, which forms the sides of the barn. Upon the top of these posts, the plates and roof are put. The partitions are all made in the same way, so that there is no sawed stuff and no nails except in roof and doors, and it makes a very good cheap building. The grooves are cut in the posts by a tool made on purpose, shaped like an adze. The plan is worthy the attention of new settlers in many situations that I know of. It will answer very well for making "cheap sheds" for some of the prairie flocks and herds. And now, my dear friends, while I take another rest, let me beg you to have patience, we travel slow, but we have much to see, and life I hope will be long enough to see it all. So once more, I am affectionately your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTES OF TRAVEL—NO. IV.

In Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri.

By Solon Robinson.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:178-79; June, 1845]

[Covering January 29-February 3, 1845]

If I mistake not, my last communication closed while we were yet in the lead region of Missouri, and as I wish to keep up a continuous narrative of all our wanderings, I shall take up the yarn as near as possible where it was last broken off, which I think was the 28th of January.

On the 29th, I passed through the town of Farmington, the name of which for once, intimates something of the country around it. During the morning ride, the road continued over the same description of hilly poor land that it had for several previous days, and the appearance of the inhabitants corresponding with the country. But in the vicinity of this town, the land is good, but the dwellers therein lack the go-ahead spirit always observable around a settlement composed of "down-easters." I observed but little good stock of any kind, though from

the appearance of the old orchards, it is evident that somebody had been a long time here—not long enough however to trim the fruit trees. In fact, while speaking of this, I find a great many persons who contend that peach trees are better without trimming. Of this, I cannot say, but I certainly shall continue to trim mine, commencing in the nursery.

I don't know but I mentioned before, that the red unctuous clay that is found with the lead, appears to be conducive to the healthy growth of fruit trees. Who can tell what is the fertilising quality it contains? The appearance of wheat still continues unpromising—and mills few and far between.

It may interest some of your readers who keep a memorandum of the weather, that I should give occasional notes of the state of it at different times and places, so that by reference, they can make comparisons. This then, has been a fine sunny day, and mud fast drying up.

Jan. 30, I passed Mine-la-Motte, situated in Madison county, the oldest worked lead mines in the United States. A tract of land, I believe 3 miles by 6, is owned, or rather held under a somewhat doubtful title, (the claim being disputed by the heirs of Reno, who was here in 1723,) by a company who lease out the right of mining for one-tenth of all the ore dug, and also the privilege of buying all the miner's ore at a given price. Notwithstanding these terms are considered hard by the miners, there appears to be a large number of them engaged, and some eight or ten smelting furnaces in operation, and two erecting for copper, which is also found here. Cobalt, manganese and nickel, are also found, but not worked. The land looks as poor as poverty, and shows but little cultivation, and that of a corresponding quality, and if I may judge from the appearance of the miserable little block log cabins, and squalid children, the whole population would be far better off if they were settled upon some of the thousands of uncultivated acres of rich prairie lying waste within a few day's journey of their

present abode. Much of the lead ore here found, is what is termed "dry bone mineral," and is intimately mixed with the dirt overlying the blue ore. To prepare it for smelting, it is taken up, dirt and all, and hauled in ox-carts to a stream, where, in a place fixed for the purpose, the dirt is washed out by a somewhat tedious operation. It also requires a different and hotter furnace to smelt it than the blue mineral. Until within five or six years it has been considered worthless. It now yields about 55 per cent of lead. What vast quantities of "dry bones" are still thrown away by farmers as worthless; and if they would not yield 55 per cent on the labor necessary to prepare them for manure, they are still too valuable to be thrown away.

After leaving this last mining tract, and passing over a few miles of equally poor land, we came to Fredericktton, the county seat of Madison, around which is some excellent land, and I am sorry that I cannot apply the same term to its cultivation; but I must speak of things as they are, and not as I would like to see them. Here it was my intention to have taken a route leading into Arkansas, but finding that to do so I must make a long detour to the south-west, on account of impassable swamps that would lay between me and the Mississippi; I took the road to Jackson, and passed over about forty miles of as miserable country, as one seeking after such a tract, could wish to find. It is very hilly, some of which are covered with pitch pine, and only along the banks of the streams are found a few settlers, who with few exceptions, it may be said, rather stay than live. After passing a long, lonely road, from the few houses upon which, it seemed as though the inhabitants had died or run away, I arrived long after dark, at a place where I had been told I should find the only "house of entertainment" upon the road. * * *

"And would'nt I like something warm and good for supper?" asked my landlady—I certainly should—and it length it came. Oh ye epicureans, what a treat! Wild

turkey and venison, say you—a right new country supper? I can almost hear your lips smack now But let me tell you, the supper consisted of seven small pieces of pork ribs for four persons, and a "power" of very coarse corn bread, and some muddy looking warm water called coffee, free from any adulteration of cream and sugar, and no other eatable thing on the table. And of this I eat, not having then seen the kitchen, which I afterwards did; and the negro cook. *I did'nt stop for breakfast,* though I did for lodging, and slept quite comfortably under my two buffalo skins: but in the morning, although I stopped at the "stage-house" for breakfast, the only improvement was, that had I been compelled, for want of food to "kiss the cook," it would have been altogether more agreeable than the evening before. If possible, the house was worse. It is an old saying that "one half the world don't know how the other half live." I wish they did. I think they would be more contented and grumble less. And I wish the other half knew how they lived themselves; I think they would live better. In truth, I think it would be beneficial to us all to know a little more how the other half of the world live, and by comparing the situation of others by our own, try to improve.

But I must leave moralising over poor suppers and worse breakfasts, and jump over these poor hills and down along the banks of a stream whose waters look as though somebody had spilt their milk in them, and when within a mile of Jackson, the county seat of Cape Girardeau, we seem to strike an entirely different region of land; and the first good looking place after leaving the hills, I find belongs to a Mr. Criddle,[1] an old Virginia tobacco planter, who is very successful here, and has of his last year crop now on hand, about 40,000 lbs. He,

[1] Jesse Criddle, born Cumberland County, Virginia, December 17, 1782; died near Jackson, Missouri, June 16, 1861. Moved to Missouri in 1840 to join an elder brother, Edward, and a son, John B. Criddle. Letter from Public Library, Jackson, Missouri.

as well as many other subscribers, would like the Cultivator to give a price current of several leading articles in several eastern cities. Mr. Criddle's land is rolling, yellowish clayey soil, and produces hemp as well as tobacco.

The town of Jackson is on a hilly location, 12 miles from the river and contains several good buildings; the court-house, bank, &c., and has a land office, in one of the officers of which, Mr. Davis, I found a very warm friend of agricultural improvement, and through his assistance and information, some dozen of the spirited and intelligent gentlemen of this town became subscribers to the Cultivator. If the U. S. government had the same liberal views that this one of her officers has, they would not only graduate the public land to a grade that it would sell at, but much of the land that I have passed over between here and St. Louis, they would give away to whoever would take it, and be well rid of it at that. Indeed, as much as Missouri has been boasted of for richness of soil, it is a fact that many do not seem to be aware of, that the south half of the State contains vast tracts of mountainous barren soil that is scarcely inhabitable, and will undoubtedly so remain for a long time. True, it has great mineral wealth. The celebrated "iron mountain" lies only a few miles west of the route I traveled, and although only some 40 or 50 miles from the Missouri river, yet the impediments in the way of making an easy mode of transporting this richest of all iron ore in the known world, has hitherto kept it in the deep forest buried. And our government is not one to lend much aid to those who buy her lands, whether to improve the science of agriculture or develop mineral wealth. But let us jog on. Though before I leave Jackson, let me say that from experiment of several of the citizens, they find the valley land best for orchards, and old rotten wood the best manure. The hill land appears too dry in summer. I have noticed several orchards that were planted by the French, that are 40 or 50 years old—and don't

look as though they had been trimmed in all that time. The question is often asked me, "should orchards be cultivated in other crops?" I answer yes, always, until the trees get big enough to take care of themselves. Grass is injurious to young trees; though for the matter of that, I don't think it is likely to injure them in this part of Missouri; there is not enough raised to injure any thing. Wheat still looks poor—has the appearance of having just come up.

From Jackson, I traveled the "dividing ridge;" all the waters to the north and west, instead of running toward the Missouri, run away from it and spread out in the swamps of Arkansas. After leaving the ridge about a dozen miles from Jackson, we have a swamp five miles across, through which the water run ten feet deep during the high water of last summer, not finding its way back again to the river until it had wended its way perhaps 200 miles through the swamps. This water leaves the river a few miles below Cape Girardeau, in consequence of the high bank that formerly kept it in its channel, having been washed away during the last season, proving very injurious to many who found themselves suddenly in possession of a new water power upon their farms—rather an uncontrolable one to be sure—that instead of serving to grind their corn, served them with notice that they could not have any to grind.

Across this swamp the road is partly through, not over, a very soft black soil, and partly over a raised causeway only 8 feet wide, and upon which, if two wagons were to meet, I suppose one would have to drive *over* the other, as there is but one chance in several miles to drive round.

From here to Benton, the land improves, and there are some good farms; those of Mr. Hutson and Mr. Allen, clerk of the county of Scott, being the best in appearance. Crops, corn and tobacco. Benton is a town that would not do much honor to the gentleman for whose honor it was named. * * * Although it was night, I hur-

ried past the town, and out to a farm house, where I felt much more comfortable. Here I found plenty of corn, and about 40 head of horses to consume it, and of a breed very common in this part of the State, which I wish I could give you an accurate idea of. They are generally light sorrel, with white face and feet, about 15 hands high, with legs bigger than a deer, that support a body in proportion to the legs. In winter they run in "the lot," and eat corn out of a hollow log, and in summer they run wherever they can to get away from the hordes of flies and musquitoes that infest the swamp where they are sent to "range for themselves." The cattle in this part of the State are of the same order, and kept in the same manner. Now corn is an excellent rich grain to make pork, but if it is suitable food to manafacture bone and muscle from for young stock, then Professor Johnston[1] and many others know nothing about science. It is however a fact that where the most corn is fed and little else, there I find the "scrub breed" in the highest state of scrubbiness.

At this last stopping place, I found some excellent sweet potatoes, *the first vegetable that I have seen upon the table since I left St. Louis;* and the owner assures me that the whole secret in keeping sweet potatoes is to keep them *dry and warm.* Mind, warm—not hot. He packs them in sun dried sand. This section of country still shows the marks of the earthquakes of 1811. In fact, there have been slight shocks every winter since—sometimes the earth cracks open and blows out quantities of sand.

Feb. 2, which, bear in mind, was the first Sunday, was a mild, clear, pleasant day, here in Missouri, a few miles west of the mouth of the Ohio river. How was it with you, reader?

This day in a 20 mile drive over mostly poor sandy

[1] Professor James F. W. Johnston, of Edinburgh, Scotland. Distinguished agricultural chemist. Author and traveler. Lectured in the United States in 1849-50.

black oak barrens, and across a small sandy level prairie, I passed through a couple of miles of Cypress swamp, along a road the like of which would be a curiosity in any civilized country. I do not blame the inhabitants here for not making a better road, for if I may judge from their looks, they will soon need to travel but a short road, and that upon a conveyance that never jolts the rider. Although much of this county is very rich, and produces great crops of corn and some wheat, yet there is so much swamp that it is decidedly sickly.

On Monday, and in a dull, gloomy and rainy day, I had to drag through 14 miles more of swamp and overflowing land to reach the Missouri;[1] and this is the only road by which half the inhabitants can reach Benton, their county seat. And over this same road, the emigrants from Kentucky, Tennessee, &c., going to Missouri and Arkansas, have to drag their loads of "plunder." I met many of them in wagons, in North Carolina carts, and on pack horses—the latter being generally packed with a most liberal supply of children and their mothers—"I reckon"—and as it "takes all sorts of folks to make a world," I am constrained to think that some of those I met are some of the "all sorts." "The ladies" in particular, riding in a very primitive way, such as was common before the invention of side-saddles, looked a good deal "sorter like" the coarse filling with which the great western web of wilderness is woven.

After a toilsome day's work of 18 miles, I was under the necessity of stopping 2 miles short of the ferry at the "iron banks," where I was to cross the Missouri. It had been my intention to have gone from Benton to New Madrid, by which I should have avoided these 16 miles of swamp, but I learned that if I crossed at New Madrid, that I should be caught in a trap in a district of country lying between there and Memphis, that is known as the "shakes," from having been shaken by earthquakes into

[1] Here and in the following paragraph, Robinson obviously meant the Mississippi River.

sundry very uninteresting goose ponds. And from New Madrid down on the Arkansas side to opposite Memphis, there is "no road nor nothing." The only good highway —high enough some times—in the country, is the Missouri, but not a very good carriage road.

Notes of Travel in the Southwest—No. V.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:239-40; Aug., 1845[1]]

[Covering February 4-12, 1845]

On the 4th Feb. Mr. R, crossed the Misssissippi, at the "Iron Banks," marked on the maps as Columbus, Kentucky, built between the river and a hill some 200 feet high, composed of clay, lead and iron stone, and up which the road leads to an entire change of soil and description of country from that on the opposite side of the river. Here the face of the country is quite broken; soil rich clay; timber, beach, sugar, poplar, oaks, hickory, dog-wood, &c.—all of which indicate a good strong soil, *and good* grass land; yet it is not here, notwithstanding this is the blue grass state.

But here is not to be found the same kind of population that is to be found in the blue grass and stock raising part of Ky. The crops here are corn enough to eat and feed through the winter, and tobacco enough to sell to buy the few necessaries required. The farms are small and houses generally poor, and here as in Missouri, always something out of order—stables without doors—farms without gates—and whole neighborhoods without a good head of cattle, horses, hogs or sheep. There is in this part of Ky., an abundance of most excellent land, tolerably heavy timbered, that can be had for about $2 an acre, out of which excellent farms could be made.

On the 5th, Mr. R. passed into Tennessee—the land similar to that described yesterday. The best buildings are the towering tobacco houses, in which the crop is

[1] Reprinted in Nashville *Agriculturist*, 6:129-30 (September, 1845).

hung up, as soon as it is cut and wilted, where it hangs to dry, and is then "fired."

The great pest in the cultivation of this crop, are the worms that prey upon the leaves, and unless destroyed, will destroy the crop. The eggs are deposited by a miller almost as large as the humming bird, and very much resembling it in movements, upon the upper and under side of the tobacco leaves, from the time it is about half grown till it matures. These hatch and grow "powerful quick," and eat "powerfully," and have all to be picked off by hand; though some have trained turkeys to perform a part of the work. In cutting up the crop, the laborer seizes the stalk with one hand, and splits the stalk nearly to the ground with a stout butcher knife, then cuts it off and throws it in piles to wilt, which it will do in a few hours, when it is hauled to the house and hung across sticks in the upper tier and so down till the beams are full; when it is sufficiently dry, large fires are built on the ground so as to give as much heat as possible with little blaze or smoke. This is a dangerous operation and accidents often happen. After it is thus cured, it hangs till a wet spell moistens it so that it can be handled to strip, or if the room is wanted, it is taken down and bulked away to make room for the next cutting. The crop avarages about 800 lbs. to the acre, worth 2½ to 3c., and 2 to 3 acres to a hand. As a matter of course when tobacco is the general crop, the land is rich; yet generally speaking the people do not appear so in this part of the country.

Although here is nothing but corn and fodder, yet stock looks better than in Missouri. Pretty good oxen with miserable yokes and bows, are worked upon more miserable carts In fact all the farming implements are of the roughest kind—even brooms, that indispensible article with a yankee housekeeper, are not to be found, unless you are pleased to denominate that miserable little switch of broom straw with which you see a negro poking about the floor as though looking for dropped pins

rather than sweeping, by the name of broom. Perhaps you may think the floors are all carpeted—on the contrary I never saw the first one of these household comforts.

This district is a natural "eccalobion" of swine, and needs no artificial hog hatching machine to encourage the natural increase of pigs. With little feeding and less care, particularly when "mast" is plenty, they live, move have their being, independent of their owner, but who nevertheless is dependent on them for his living.

The western district of Tennessee contains an abundance of most excellent land, yet covered with the native growth of forest trees, mostly oak, except upon creek bottom land, and occasionally upon small tracts of upland; where all the kinds of timber usually found upon the richest alluvial land of the west, grow in the greatest luxuriance; requiring a great deal of hard toil to prepare it for culture, but affording an assurance to the husbandman that when once cleared, he will have a soil that no judicious system of culture can ever wear out. But I am sorry to say that that system however, is not pursued generally, as can be seen in the fact after a few years of "skinning," it becomes too poor to produce a good crop of tobacco, and therefore the tobacco planter is annually making additions of new land instead of trying to keep up the fertility of that which was first cleared. Tobacco is a very ameliorating crop, and leaves the land in fine condition, particularly for wheat; which crop however, is but little cultivated, for two reasons—first, the tobacco crop in "wormy time," requires every pair of hands on the plantation that is able to crush a worm, at the very time too when the wheat needs an equal amount of care to save it from total destruction by the weevil, which often destroys the crop even after it has been thrashed and cleaned and stored away. And secondly, the tobacco is a more certain crop in growth and sale for cash, which is the grand desideratum, and which will be sure to prevent the cultivator from bestowing any

care towards the improvement or preservation of his soil in a country where new land can be purchased so cheap as it can here, when that first cleared will no longer produce his favorite crop.

On the 7th of Feb., between Dresden and Jackson, Tenn., I began to leave the tobacco and enter among the cotton plantations, the soil becoming more sandy and light, though not showing much more appearance of wealth until within the precincts of the latter town, which is beautifully situated upon a plain, and contains some 1,500 inhabitants, and many handsome mansions; a very fine court house and a college and a flourishing female school. Leaving this place a short distance from the town, we cross the "Forked Deer Creek," over a toll bridge and high clay turnpike over a two mile wide bottom, subject to overflows, and covered with beech timber, which if cleared off and set with grass, I ven-[ture] to say would prove more profitable land than some of the upland. I notice generally that the bottoms are the last to be cleared, but time will prove their value. Out of this stream, the cotton from this region is sent in flat boats to the Mississippi. Between this town and Lagrange, the last town in Tenn., the land grows more and more sandy, and when badly cultivated, is very liable to wash into gullies; some of which, particularly by the road side, becomes perfectly unmanageable. Passed fine cotton plantations, and some very good and some I think very poor land, covered with small black oak timber, and crossed the Hatchee river, which in high water is navigable for steamboats, and like nearly all the streams in this country, having a wide overflowable bottom. We are now fairly entered upon the cotton region, that being the all engrossing crop of this part of Tennessee, and of which I expect hereafter to have much to see and say as I proceed south.

This, 9th of Feb., four miles south of Lagrange, upon a very warm sunny day, I crossed the Mississippi line. The grass to-day looks green and spring like, and plum

trees are leaving, and peach buds are just ready to burst into blossom. Much land shows that there has been a good deal of a kind of work done that people really seem to be in sober earnest when they call it "plowing." The weather is more like May than February. Birds and frogs making meloby—grass growing—flowers blooming —gardens making, etc.

From here to Holly Springs, the county seat of Marshall co., and a flourishing fine town, the land grows hilly and sandy, and bottom lands more swampy. The upland timber mostly black oak, interspersed with white oak and hickory, and much of it uncultivated. Some fine farms—horses good—cattle poor and sheep poorer. In the course of the day after passing Holly Springs, I met with the first stone that I have seen since leaving the mountains of Missouri. It is a kind of redish sand and iron stone, and has the appearance of being of volcanic origin. Passed Oxford, the county seat of Lafayette co., and crossed the Tallahatchie river, (I like these Indian names,) which is also another high water steamboat stream, with wide bottom uncultivated beech land, upon which grass instead of trees ought to be growing. Saw mills through all this region being scarce, and lumber from $1.50 to $2.50 per hundred, nearly all the houses are built of logs. Near the south line of Lafayette, crossed the "Yokenatuffa," (a very pretty name when you get used to it,) across a beech bottom, with a liberal sprinkle of the beautiful holly.

On the 12th day of Feb., in Yallabusha county, I saw peach and plum trees in full bloom, and garden peas and potatoes up, and oats sowing. And here in one field I saw 20 one horse, or one mule plows, skinning the surface of this light, loose, fine, sandy soil, and sending it on a voyage of discovery to the gulf of Mexico. And as in this country I am going to initiate my readers into the arcana of a cotton plantation, I will here part company with them, under the assurance that the country we are yet to ramble over will afford an abundance of incidents

far more interesting than that which which we have hitherto visited; and I humbly hope that I may be able so to collect and arrange those incidents that you will be pleased to continue to give a monthly welcome to the familiar face of your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTES OF TRAVEL IN THE SOUTHWEST—NO. VI.[1]

[Extract; Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:271-73; Sep., 1845[2]]

[Covering February 12-17, 1845]

Finding so little of the spirit of improved husbandry, and so few with whom I could feel as though I was with old acquaintances, the pleasure of a circumstance that

[1] The editor prefaced this article with a summary of the introductory part of Robinson's letter: "On the 12th day of February, the date of his letter, the peach and plum trees in the part of the country from which he writes, (the north portion of Mississippi,) are in full bloom. He states that the region is quite new, it being 'the much talked of Chickasaw purchase,' and that the people live mostly in log cabins. The land is described as being generally good for cotton, but in Mr. R.'s opinion, an investment of more than 37 cents per acre, for a large portion of it, would not prove profitable, on account of the extremely low price of cotton. The course of cultivation generally practiced, is represented as very deteriorating. The land is mostly hilly, and by injudicious management, is said to be greatly injured by washing. Mr. R. says he passed a field in the north part of Yallabusha county, in which he saw 'twenty plows, each drawn by a single horse or mule, and some of them pretty poor at that.' This land, he says, 'was to be planted to corn without any further plowing, and this certainly was not two inches deep in the average.' The soil is said to have been originally about six inches deep, but by this mode of barely 'scratching' and loosening the surface, it is in many cases nearly all washed away, leaving the fields cut up by deep gullies. But that this wasteful cultivation, which Mr. R. so much deplores, is by no means universal, will appear from his description of some beautiful and well-managed plantations—to one of which he introduces us by a relation of the following pleasant incident, which, though somewhat *elongated*, we think our readers will be interested to peruse in his own language."

[2] Reprinted in Nashville *Agriculturist*, 6:161-63 (November, 1845).

happened to me on this evening cannot be realized by my readers, by any description that I can give; and can only be judged of by other travellers who after toiling despondingly through darkness and difficulty, suddenly find themselves by the warm hearthstone of a new found and unexpected friend.

The day had been warm and balmy as a New-England mid May day, the roads good from the effect of good weather. The blossoms, as I have before remarked, making the air fragrant; garden vegetables green growing in luxuriance; while hundreds of negro laborers, busy in the fields, made the world seem gladsome with their cheerful laugh and jovial song. Yet amid all, I could not feel gladsome myself, for I could not but see ruin following in the footsteps of such a system of cultivation as I too frequently witnessed. In this mood of mind, I passed Coffeeville, the county seat of Yallabusha, just before sun down, and as the town, which is built upon almost as many hills as ancient Rome, offers but little inducement to a stranger to spend a night, I passed on with the intention of stopping at some rode-side house, a mile or two on; but after passing that distance and seeing no more pleasant prospect ahead, I made inquiry of a passing negro, and was assured that I should find no stopping place "this side of Tom Hardiman's, and dat was six mile mighty bad road," which I was bound to get over or stick fast in, with a tired team and in a dark night. On, on, I went, over hills, stumps, gulleys, streams, mud, and in the expectancy of a very poor supper. How I was at length disappointed! Although I found the house a low log cabin, built after the universal, never varying pattern, of two rooms with a broad hall between, I was struck with surprise, and at once impressed with the idea that I should find something out of the common course of things within. Reader, would you know why I received this impression in advance, and that so suddenly, and only from the glimpse I caught by candlelight, as the host advanced to answer my call.

Here it is. From the house, yes, from that rude, block log cabin to the front gate, extended a neat arbor for the support of twining flowers, climbing vines and roses. Did you ever see such an outward sign, without feeling at once assured that taste, intelligence, neatness, and comfort dwelt within? At all events I found it true in this instance. In far less time than usual, when waiting upon a negro cook, I was seated at the supper table. The neatness and profuse variety of the dishes with which it was loaded, were rendered still more palatable by the presence of just such a woman as might have been expected from the outside sign which I have mentioned, and the beauty of whose face was undoubtedly improved by the healthful glow that she had acquired that very day by her personal superintendence of the cultivation of her flowers. But weary as she may have been, and late as was the hour, she did not feel herself at liberty to neglect the tired and hungry traveller; and I ate a far better supper that night in "Tom Hardiman's" log cabin, than I had before eaten in far better houses, where better things might have been looked for, only that the lady did not cultivate a flower garden.

Although I am no great believer in clairvoyance, I certainly witnessed here a wonderful case of "guessing," considering the guesser was a Tennesseean instead of one of the "guessing nation."

During supper I observed that I was undergoing a most rigid scrutiny by Mr. Hardiman, who on observing that I noticed him, began to excuse himself by saying that he was struck by a very singular impression which he could not account for, and he had been examining my face to see if he could not recognize the features of "an old acquaintance," whom he had never seen or known, except as he had seen his features in his letters to the Cultivator and other agricultural papers; and though he had never received any intimation that the person he alluded to was in that part of the U. S., he was irresistibly impressed with the idea that I was the man.

My curiosity was excited; my toilsome evening's ride was not forgotten, but looked back upon with pleasure. I had at length found an "old acquaintance," and I did not hesitate to ask him "who he took me for?" And when I assured him that I was the very individual he had guessed I was, I have never met with a warmer reception or apparently given more pleasure by a visit to any real old acquaintance in my life. Somewhere along toward the last end of the night I laid down to take a nap, and in the morning after breakfast, saddle horses were brought to the door, upon one of which I spent the forenoon in looking over the plantation and examining the first specimens I had seen of "side hill ditching," and "horizontal plowing," of which I shall speak further hereafer.

Mr. Hardiman has discovered a fact that the former proprietor of the place was not aware of, and I speak of it here because there are a great many others who have not yet discovered it. And that is, that land lying at the foot of the hills, that receives all the soil that is worked down from them, if once cleared of timber and brush and brought into cultivation, will actually produce cotton. True, it does require a little more labor to clear it than it does the thin timbered and thinner soiled hills; and another thing, it wont wear out, and give the owner an excuse to migrate. When Mr. Hardiman first commenced, he was laughed at by some of his neighbors for trying to cultivate a swamp. But a few ditches to straighten the branches and lead off the standing water, soon proved how much more valuable this kind of neglected land is, than the poor washing hills. Here I saw another curiosity. Hands employed scraping every hole and corner around the buildings and yards for manure.

The food for the field hands is all cooked at the kitchen, and dealt out with out weight or measure, and they have all the bacon, corn bread, and vegetables that they need.

At dinner to-day, Feb. 15, I feasted upon some of the largest and best heads of lettuce I ever saw, grown in

the open air, and a greater variety of vegetables than I have seen since I left St. Louis, one of which was the Jerusalem artichoke, which, boiled and mashed up like turneps, makes an excellent dish. I presume many of your eastern readers do not understand that the *Jerusalem* artichoke is a kind of vegetable that they have long been acquainted with, and which can be found in some by-corner on half the New England farms. They are a valuable crop, being raised for hogs. Mr. Hardiman has raised Irish potatoes from the same seed, for eight years, and thereby proved that it is not necessary to get new seed from the North every year, " 'cause it runs out." He plants in November, and they ripen in May, but he lets them remain through the summer in the hills.

One fact in regard to his management of negroes might be pursued by parents toward children, as well as masters towards servants. *He keeps them at home;* and he very rarely has occasion to punish.

Having learned that the name of the post-office here was "Okachickama," I found by reference to a memorandum, that I was in the neighborhood of another old acquaintance, JOHN T. LEIGH, Esq.,[1] and in the afternoon we rode over to his house, and found him reading the S. W. Farmer, where he had just discovered that I was on my way to Mississippi, and expressing his regret to his family that he should not probably meet with me, as he lived off of any leading road. His astonishment and pleasure may be "guessed" at, when Mr. Hardiman introduced the very individual whose name was then upon his lips.

I had only come for a short call. *I stayed two nights.* Who ever escaped Virginia hospitality in less time. How these meetings and joyous welcomes, and show of respect from every member of a family, do sink into the

[1] John T. Leigh and his wife, Martha Townes Lee, are mentioned in *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi,* 1:117 (Chicago, 1891).

heart and search out every kind feeling, and strengthen every emotion that prompts in the labor of doing good, and promoting the happiness of our fellow creatures. What other recompense can be so dear to one devoting time and talents to increase the knowledge, and consequently add joy to the mind of his universal brethren, as such interviews as the one I have just described and am now describing. Have patience with me, my northern friends, if I appear tedious, but I am anxious to paint you a picture of a Mississippi planter, in which you may see all the little minutiæ of his household; so different, so wonderfully different from your own.

Mr. Leigh works about 35 field hands, including blacksmiths, carpenters, spinners, and weavers; the latter only working in the field in "picking time"—that is, when the cotton is ripe and ready to gather, which in the way of hurry, answers to the time of your harvest. He owns about ninety negroes, old and young, all of whom live in families by themselves, in very comfortable log cabins, some of which are neatly furnished and provided with household matters and things, and others that are exactly the reverse, and look just like some white folks' houses. These families have a weekly ration of three and a half pounds of bacon, clear of bone, for each member, except small children, who are furnished with food in proportion to size and numbers. About a peck and a half of meal is also given, and more, if they can use it without waste, and sweet potatoes, turneps, squashes, onions, green corn, and various other vegetables, as well as melons and peaches, by untold quantities; and all show by their looks that they are full fed and well clothed.

"The quarters," that is the place where the negro cabins stand, are away from the dwelling house, and are so arranged as to be in sight of the overseer's house, so that he can always have an eye to anything going wrong. For negroes, like children, want a deal of careful watching at all times.

When the hands go to their work in the morning, all the children are taken to the nursery, where they are taken care of and fed by a woman who does nothing else. Women never go to the field until the child is a month old, and from then till weaning time, return to nurse them at stated times. Hands either take their breakfast and dinner to the field with them, or have it sent out in little tin buckets, kept for the purpose.

Mr. Leigh has 640 acres of land in cultivation, including about 80 acres taken up in yards, gardens, orchard, &c. Of the balance, he puts 200 acres in corn, 60 or 70 acres in oats, and the remainder in cotton, upon which he made for the last three years, from 125 to 135 bales a year. [A bale of cotton is always 400 lbs.] He put up last year, 16,000 lbs. of bacon, for the use of the plantation, and intends in future, to keep up a supply. This being the first year of the ten since the commencement of the plantation that it has provided its own meat.

He still continues to clear some land every year, and particularly to clear up all the "hard spots" that were left at the first clearing; straightening the crooked channels of branches, and filling up and cultivating the old channels; draining little ponds, &c. But what is of vast importance and necessity for every Mississippi farmer to learn and practice, he has the whole plantation under a complete system of hill-side ditches, by which he wholly prevents the light soil from washing away, and adds greatly to the value of the land, and the annual amount of the crops.

Now if any body should ask "what are hill-side ditches?" I have to say, that the whole of all the numerous hill-sides are ditched with one or more ditches, as may be necessary to take up and carry off all the falling water, almost on a level, and winding round till an outlet can be found to discharge it without injury to the land. These ditches are laid off by a level, and are intended to remain permanent fixtures; and all the plowing has to conform to their shape, and as a matter of

course, utterly annihilating "straight rows." This great and indispensable improvement upon Mr. Leigh's farm, was done by his very intelligent son, Randolph, who until the present year has had the sole charge of overseeing the plantation; thereby proving, that one rich planter's son could make himself a useful member of society. I wish I could say all sons were like this estimable young man—particularly my own. In this connection, I must not forget to mention Mr. Leigh's son-in-law, Dr. Town, whose plantation is adjoining, and cultivated under the same system, and which he wholly oversees himself.

Mr. Leigh works 17 mules and horses, and three yoke of oxen; has about 200 hogs, 50 head of cattle, 70 sheep, which are sheared twice a year, and from which he makes all the light negro clothing,—he also makes all the cotton clothing used.

He hauls his cotton about seven miles, where it is shipped on steamboats in high water, upon the Yallabusha river, which empties into the Yazoo, and thence into the Mississippi, above Vicksburgh. All his supplies come through the same source, even a year's stock of flour, which he gets from Richmond, that being the only kind that will keep good through the summer. Who can tell why? It is important to Ohio millers, whose flour can always be had considerably cheaper.

Mr. Leigh has what but few others in this region have, an abundance of stone. It is a mixture of iron and sand, very hard, and is found in layers, with natural smooth fractures, that fit it for building purposes. It stands fire when the edge is exposed to the heat, but if reversed from the position that it is found in, it scales off and flies all over the house like grape shot.

Mr. Leigh is very successful in keeping his sweet potatoes packed in cotton seed, in a well ventilated room; and as a very strong evidence that his negroes do not suffer much want for food, I observed that this potatoe house had no fastening to prevent them from helping themselves if badly pinched with hunger.

Now I think I hear some of my eastern fair readers exclaim, "Well now, I do wish he would tell us what sort of a house this Mississippi nabob lives in?—very splendid, I dare say. Oh, I wish I could see it." Well, madam, it is a common double log cabin, with a hall between. "Why, you don't mean to say, that a man with such a farm, and so many negroes, lives in such a house as *that?*"

Oh yes I do, and very comfortably and nicely he does live too, for he has a wife—ah, a *wife,* madam: not a mere piece of household furniture, such as your boarding school bred farmer's daughter will make—totally unfit for a farmer's wife. "Well now, do tell me where they all stay in such a house as that?" Why, madam, there is another cabin back in the yard—that is the kitchen—no matter that it is so far off the eating room—it is Mississippi fashion; and there are plenty of negroes to run back and forth; and here is another building—that is the smoke house; and there is another, that is the store room; and there are two or three more, those are lodging rooms. No matter that they are ten rods from the house—it is the fashion—and as for that, convenience and comfort is ten times worse sacrificed every day, than it is in these household arrangements. True, such arrangements would not suit us at the north, but here use and negro labor make the difference. I have seen in more than one instance, the wood pile more than 40 rods from the house, and "the spring" twice that distance—two inconveniences that a yankee could never put up with. He would sooner have "the well," as well as the wood pile, both in the road, right in front of the door of the house, that almost stands in the road too, to say nothing of all the carts, plows, and sleds, also in the road, "between the house and barn," it is so convenient.

But we have much more yet to see of Mississippi life; and circumstances compel me to take a hasty leave of this fine family—this "fine old Virginia gentleman,"—and now for a little season I again bid you a kind adieu.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Notes of Travel in the Southwest—No. VII.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:303-4; Oct., 1845[1]]

[Covering February 17-20, 1845]

Once again, my friends, I come with my monthly greeting. Well, where parted we company last? Let us reflect. We had just visited Mr. Leigh, and given a slight sketch of his method of *farming,* which I have italicised to give the term a contradistinction from that of planting —the latter term meaning only the cultivation of cotton. But before leaving Mr. Leigh's neighborhood, I must notice that I was on President Polk's plantation, and earnestly hope that his cultivation of Uncle Sam's big plantation will be as well managed under the overseership of Mr. Polk, as his Mississippi cotton plantation is reported to be. The next point of interest that I visited was the plantation of Capt. Wm. Eggleston, of Holmes county, who is one of the good farmers of Mississippi. He is a Virginian, from Amelia county, and having an introduction from his friend, Mr. Leigh, I met with a very hearty reception.

The 17th of February was an uncomfortably warm day. The peas in Captain E.'s garden several inches high, lettuce in full head, and other things in proportion. Captain Eggleston has about 1,400 acres of land under cultivation, and upon which live 20 whites, and 150 blacks, 70 of which are field hands; about one-third of his land is kept in corn and oats, the proportion of corn being as two to one. He keeps up a continued rotation of crops, and puts all the manure that he can upon the corn, which averages about 25 or 30 bushels to the acre; plants corn and sows oats in February. He is now working 43 mules and horses, and 28 oxen, and makes 560 bales a year, which he has to haul 10 or 12 miles. He also raises all the grain and meat required upon the plantation, feeding his negroes at the rate of 3½ lbs. clear bacon per head per week, with about a peck and a half of

[1] Reprinted in part in Augusta, Georgia, *Southern Cultivator,* 3:169 (November, 1845).

corn meal, besides vegetables and fruit, melons, &c. Like Mr. Leigh, he gets his flour from Virginia, and asserts that no other will keep well through the summer.

I saw in his garden some very fine fig trees, which as far north as this produce remarkably well. Peaches are unfailing, but with grapes he has not been successful. Apples are not a southern fruit, yet many are attempting their cultivation. And now a word of Captain Eggleston's system of cultivation. His place is all hilly, thin, oak land, very light soil, that melts away in water not *quite* so easy as salt or sugar; and yet he has scarcely a gully upon the whole farm; but he has more than 20 miles of side hill ditches, which are so constructed that they take up all the surface water before it passes far enough over the ground to form gullies.

While riding over the plantation, I found one of the overseers engaged, with a large force of hands, laying off and making ditches upon some new ground, it being a rule never to put in a second crop until the land is ditched.

I will attempt a description of the very simple instrument used as a level. It consists first of an upright standard about five feet high, the lower end sharpened to stick in the ground, and about a foot above is a shoulder, upon which rests a frame made of thin cross bars, tennoned at each end into uprights, about four feet long, one bar at top and one at bottom, and one in centre, with holes through which the upright passes, and upon which it plays freely. This standard being set in the ground and a plum line brought to rest upon a scale previously graded to the required fall of the ditch, the operator sights along the middle bar until it strikes the ground at the point where he would commence the ditch, and then moves it round the face of the hill he wishes to circle, having the various points marked as far as he could extend the view from that point. And here I cannot refrain from mentioning a very remarkable fact which I saw, and which Captain E. assured me that he

had often witnessed, but could not account for. He had a negro boy—not a very remarkably bright one either—about a dozen years old, who being stationed at the starting point of the ditch, would start upon a smart trot around the face of the hill, and when he had gone as far as he thought necessary to strike a stake, he would stop, and never four feet out of the way. Query, had he a water level in his head? How can his leveling faculty be accounted for? I wish some political *levelers* had as happy a faculty of always being right.

When the line is thus staked off, the same boy walks back upon his track, picking up the stakes, while the overseer guiding a horse drawing a slightly marking plow held by another hand, follows on, and thus makes the line of the ditch for the big plow that follows, and in turn is followed by hands with hoes until the ditch is completed.

The alteration that I would recommend in this instrument, would be to substitute a spirit level for the plumb line, as on a windy day the line is too much affected.

This level upon hilly land is much preferable to the rafter level, and is as easily made.

As before remarked, the rows have to conform to the ditches, however crooked, and the manner of plowing is to lay off the rows in the first instance, the middles often being left unbroken until after the corn is planted, and perhaps up. Captain Eggleston's plan is to plow deep directly under the corn, and plow shallow while tending the growing crop. His motto is to plow deep for all crops. He assures us that since he has adopted the level system of ditching and plowing, that in addition to the advantage to the land, that his crops are better and the soil improving instead of deteriorating.

All of his mechanical work is done by his negroes upon his plantation. He has two negro carpenters that he occasionally hires out to others at the rate of $40 apiece per month. He estimates that he has ten miles of plantation roads, and 20 miles of rail fence, more than

half of which is to fence against other folks' cattle instead of his own; and this fence has all to be renewed once in seven years, as in this humid climate that period is the length of durability of rails. What an enormous tax! And with the enormous waste of timber going on, how long will it be before all the rail timber is exhausted? What is to be done then? What is to be substituted? It is time this matter was thought of even amid the forests of Mississippi. There is another matter that ought to be thought of too by every cotton planter. What are they going to do when the supply of basket timber is exhausted, as it already is in some parts of the state? Will they send to the north for these indispensable articles? Well, so be it. We are ready to furnish you, and we will soon learn that you cannot pick cotton without baskets. I advise you to commence immediately the cultivation of OZIER WILLOW. It will grow upon all your creek banks, and it will make a more handsome and valuable fringe than many that I have seen in the middle of your fields. There is another article that grows almost spontaneously upon some of the rich bottoms and waste corners of your plantations, that would bring money if sent to market; and that is red pepper, the grinding of which you can do in your own mills, and pack in your empty flower barrels—try it. You can get the willow from New-York; I don't know in particular from where, but I will venture to name my friend, Charles Downing, nurseryman, Newburgh, whose honesty I have great faith in.

And begin in time to husband your resources for fencing. Don't pursue a course that I witnessed a few days ago. Deadening good rail trees within the proposed enclosure to stand and rot down, and going outside among the standing timber and cutting down the trees for rails, and for the reason that by so doing it saved the trouble of clearing up the tops within the field—those outside could lay undisturbed to rot.

Leaving Captain Eggleston on the 18th, the first plan-

tation I passed was one that once had been a very fine one, of comparative level and rich soil, now in utter ruins: cause—debt, law and taxes. Fences, buildings and land all in ruins; the former rotted and fallen down, and the latter gullied away. In the midst of all this desolation, an ancient mound reared its lofty head, looking still more the lonely monument of an extinguished race than it would when met upon the wild waste where *civilization* had not yet set its more enduring mark. Even here upon this monument the hand of the white man had been, and exposed to view the interior, "full of dead men's bones."

After passing Lexington, the county seat of Holmes, which is rather a pleasant-looking town, we begin to leave the hilly country, and find one, though of the same kind of soil, much more level, and showing more good farms, upon several of which I saw large forces busy planting corn. Cotton seed is much used for manuring corn, sometimes spread broadcast and sometimes put in the drill with the seed, which is generally planted in drills and covered with the plow.

From a Mr. Adams, whose hospitality I partook of this night, I learned that hot ashes are a very effectual remedy for what is generally called "the damps" in wells. They appear to absorb and neutralize the gas—so he says. It is easily tried. Mr. A. is a great economist of manure, and plows his land upon the level system, but without ditches, which Captain Eggleston says, upon side hills is worse than straight up and down. Mr. Adams' land is, however, comparatively level.

February 19th, I passed through the town of Benton, the county seat of Yazoo, and which is so superior to its namesake in Missouri, both in appearance and character of its inhabitants, that one or the other ought to change its name, and principally though for the reason that papers directed to one often get astray to the other. I regret that the anxiety that I began to feel to reach Log Hall, prevented me from making a stop at this town and forming more close acquaintance with some of the many

friends and readers of the Cultivator that in a very short visit I found here. It was then my intention to return, which circumstances prevented. Although I would not make distinctions among friends, yet I may be permitted to signalise Mr. Jenkins, the P. M., and Wm. Battel, Esq., whom I found most active and anxious to encourage the reading of agricultural papers.

A few miles west of Benton I called upon John M. Cullen, who has invented, as he thinks, an improved cotton scraper—it being a small piece of steel attached to a plow in such a manner that he can "bar off" and "scrape" at the same time. I witnessed a trait in Mr. Cullen's character that I desire to mention, together with the wish that others would do likewise.

He owns a pond, which is the only watering place for teams upon the road for a long distance, and which he necessarily had to enclose; but instead of shutting the public out, he has gone to considerable expense to provide for their accommodation, and has put up a sign of "Bethesda," the meaning of which Bible readers will understand.

But let us go on with our wonders. To-day I first met with the "Spanish moss" regions, which, contrary to the opinion entertained by many, that it only grows upon trees in swamps, is found equally abundant upon the hills. I don't know that it shows any preference in the kind of tree it grows upon, for it is not a parasite; that is, so far as I could observe, it appears to have no connection with the tree, but hangs loosely upon the limbs, sometimes hanging down two or three feet. Its color is silvery grey, and when all the trees in the forest are thickly covered, it gives a curious appearance. Although at the north we esteem it valuable for mattresses, etc., it is here but little used.

This evening I crossed the "Big Black," a stream large enough for steamers in high water, but for want of improvement but little used. It runs through a wide, rich, overflowable bottom, entirely uncultivated. During two

days ride I passed land that was not yet clear of timber, that had been worn out and thrown out of use. This bottom land would be more enduring.

In this region of the state there is great difficulty in getting wells, while streams and springs are few and subject to dry up; and though every body ought to have cisterns and artificial ponds, yet every body has not, and none that I have met with seem to be "fixed," but are ready to sell out and hie away to Texas, or some other place "further west."

February 20th I travelled on a very broken and poorly cultivated part of Madison and Hinds counties; passed several "gone to Texas" plantations, the appearance of which give the country a desolate look.

Enquiring for Dr. Phillips,[1] I found that "a prophet is not known in his own country," and that if a man wishes to distinguish himself "among some folks," he must turn politician, instead of becoming a writer for agricultural papers. However, most that I inquired of seemed to know that the Doctor lived somewhere, though the exact where they could not tell, and for which latter piece of ignorance I did not much blame them after I knew myself, for a more out of the way place can't well be thought of. Knowing that his post-office address was "Edwards' Depot," I easily found that, but I cannot say that the seven miles from there was so easy to find in the night, or so pleasant to drive over; but perseverance accomplished the task, and I found the Doctor and his family so much more pleasant than the route to his place,

[1] Martin Wilson Philips, born June 17, 1806, Columbia, South Carolina; died February 26, 1889. Southern planter, agricultural editor, and writer. Made his plantation, "Log Hall," famous through his agricultural experiments and writings. Editor of the *South-Western Farmer*, *Philips' Southern Farmer*, and, for a short time, of the *Cultivator*. Interested in education for women. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 14:537-38; "Diary of a Mississippi Planter, January 1, 1840, to April, 1863" (Franklin L. Riley, ed.), in *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, 10:305-481 (1909).

that with the reader's permission who has traveled thus far with me, we will tarry a while and partake of heart-felt hospitality while resting from the fatigue of our thousand miles journey. And now for another short month, dear reader, a kind adieu from your old friend and fellow traveller.

SOLON ROBINSON.

NOTES OF TRAVEL IN THE SOUTHWEST—No. VIII.

Visit to Warren county—Vicksburgh—Hill-side cultivation—Orcharding—&c., &c.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:334-35; Nov., 1845]

[Covering February 21-28, 1845]

Well, dear reader, are you rested? so am I, and so, if you please, we will go ahead again. During a rest of four days at Log Hall, the residence of Dr. Phillips, I have eaten more vegetables than during the four weeks that I have been on the road from St. Louis.

Leaving the examination and description of the Doctor's plantation till another day, let us mount our horses and take a ride over Warren county, and visit the city of the "Walnut Hills," the far-famed town of Vicksburgh. This county is one of several similar ones along the Mississippi river, and presents a most singular formation. It is called hilly, but I think the word side-hills would convey a more correct idea. It seems to me, from careful examination, to have been a deposit of alluvium two or three hundred feet deep. At the bottom, coarse gravel, then fine, then sand, and then a deposit some ten or twelve feet deep, of fine silex, lime and shells; now a bed of rich marly loam, above which is the fine alumina that was held longest in solution. After this deposit had lain long enough to form a stratum of limestone underneath, it was apparenty disturbed by an earthquake, which left the surface in the most uneven condition of any tract of country I have ever seen. I saw many side-hills in cultivation lying at an angle of 45 degrees, and singular as it may appear, although there is not a level

farm in the county, until the present season, side-hill plows have been almost unknown. Those of Barnaby & Mooer's, that I have seen, are entirely too large. If they will make a light, one-horse size and send them here, they will find a market. The few now in use are the tumbling shares.

If any of my readers are anxious to know how such steep hill sides can be cultivated, they must come and see—I cannot tell them. There are many farms that do not contain a spot of level land large enough to build a house upon; but the fertility of the soil is so great and so inexhaustible while it remains unwashed away, that it has tempted men to overcome difficulties that never would have been encountered upon poorer land. Although the cultivated hill-sides are much steeper and more numerous than those of Capt. Eggleston, yet I believe the same system could be adopted to save this excellent soil from utter destruction. Though it does not appear to wash away quite so easily as the lighter lands up north, yet I find places here gone past all redemption, and worthless for every purpose except Bermuda-grass pastures, over which nothing could range but sheep and goats. In fact the whole country looks more suitable for a sheep range than for anything else, and in no part of the United States could wool be raised to better advantage. Of the feed for them I shall speak hereafter, and as to the deterioration of the wool on account of the *climate*, I have only one word to say, and that is *"fudge!"* If any one chooses to contend for the contrary, I will bring witnesses.

We left the Doctor's place for our ride on the 25th of February, which was so hot that it was very uncomfortable. On account of the high water in the Chittaloosa, the Indian name for the "Big Black," and a much better one, to my notion, we had to go a round about way. We passed during the day, in our twenty miles ride to Vicksburgh, some very good plantations, and as is almost universal in the state, all well fenced, and but very few

good dwellings. The cause, I have heretofore spoken of —difficulty of getting lumber—mill streams are among the things wanted.

Vicksburgh is built on the face of a bluff that rises from the river 200 or 300 feet high, and which is broken into sundry other bluffs and ravines, and these are multiplied by lesser ones wherever the water can get a chance to gully out the soft friable soil. The town contains a very quiet and peaceable set of order-loving inhabitants notwithstanding the bad name that they got a few years ago, by a very summary way of ridding themselves of a pack of gamblers, robbers, and murderers. It is a place of considerable business, though not half as much as it was. The railroad from here to Jackson cuts off a good deal of trade. The town is situated at the bottom of a great bend of the river, and as there is no high land on the opposite side, fears have long been entertained that the everchanging stream might make a "cut-off' across the narrow part of the bend, and thus leave the town "alone in its glory." Greater changes than this have taken place. "The Walnut Hills" settlement and fort, near which the present town is built, has an ancient and historical name. It was settled by the old French explorers.

About dark we left town with the intention of riding out to a friend's house, about four or five miles—Mississippi miles, and over Mississippi roads, and through, I can't tell how many, Mississippi gates—more than we were able to find by negro directions, in a dark night, till near midnight. Late as it was, we were met at the gate in southern style—a guest never thinking of entering the house without this little ceremony.

Before pushing ourselves off in the morning, we took a stroll over the farm, and the greatest curiosity witnessed was the possibility of raising a crop upon such a wonderful uneven surface. Among the small curiosities was an alder tree eight inches in diameter, and a sumach fifteen inches in diameter. And I was assured

that this latter was used abundantly on the Yazoo river for rail timber. It grows tall and straight. I visited upon this place a heavy cane-brake. If it is thought by any of my readers that cane only grows upon low, wet land, let them think more correctly. All these hill-sides were originally covered with an immense growth of cane, now fast disappearing from the country. It grows so thick upon the ground as to make it difficult to penetrate. I was unable to learn the period of time it requires to come to maturity, or whether there is any certain time. A few years ago, I think in 1830, nearly all the cane in this part of the country seeded. It then dies. The seed bears a slight resemblance to oats, and is about as nutritive. All kinds of stock are fond of young cane, and it is by the constant cropping that it is so rapidly destroyed. Its want of durability renders it of little value, though it is often used to make drying scaffolds for cotton. But all scaffolds except folding ones, are nothing but a makeshift.

The next place that I shall take notice of, is that of R. Y. Rogers,[1] five miles from Vicksburgh, and from whom we met a most hearty welcome, and enjoyed a pleasant night visit. Mr. Rogers is one of the best farmers in the state—that is, upon a small scale, and that he does not raise a pound of cotton, affects not the truth of the assertion. For reduced by shipwrecks and other misfortunes from an abundant competency, to one pair of hands, he did not hesitate to use them. I venture to say that with his two or three negroes, and market-cart, which carries every thing he raises to Vicksburgh market, he makes more clear cash than some planters do with 200 or 300 negroes. It will be recollected that 20 to 30 bushels of corn per acre is about the average yield here; but Mr. Rogers has succeeded in raising 90 bushels per acre on his steep side-hills. He however turns his attention chiefly to marketable vege-

[1] R. Y. Rogers, contributor to the agricultural reports of the Patent Office.

tables, and having but little competition, he reaps the benefit. I saw tomatoes in his garden to-day, Feb. 27, a foot high.

Within a short time past, Mr. Rogers has established a milk-selling business in town, and reduced the price from 40 to 25 cents per gallon. He assured me that it used to be sold for *two dollars* per gallon. After a most pleasant visit with this very intelligent gentleman and his lovely wife, he accompanied us as far as Col. Hebron's,[1] where we met Dr. Bryant[2] and several other gentlemen, and partook of one of the most sumptuous dinners that I have yet seen on my journey. And when we take into account the long distance between the house and kitchen, which Dr. Phillips and myself computed at twenty rods, it appears a still greater wonder how such a dinner could have been gotten upon the table in one day. This wide separation of the house and kitchen, is only an extreme of a very extraordinary fashion. If a similar fashion prevailed in Yankee land, we should hear of sundry enactments to "encourage the building of railroads" between the two points. I will just mention that among the standing dishes at Col. H.'s dinner, was one of his *three year old* hams.

Col. H. is earnestly engaged in a system of culture that I should like to see more universally prevalent here, where it can be followed with such pleasure and profit, and for which the lands of Warren county seem so well adapted. I allude to orcharding. Col. Hebron, Dr. Phillips, and several others, are making extensive efforts to supply the New-Orleans market, particularly with peaches. In a small way, this has already been done at a most enormous profit. Raising fruit and cotton will work well together; for the great hurry with the cotton crop is in picking time, which is long after the fruit season

[1] Colonel John L. Hebron, native of Virginia. Moved to Mississippi about 1820. Widely known as the proprietor of the La Grange nursery and fruit orchard, containing 11,000 bearing trees. Died about 1862. Letter from Vicksburg Public Library.

[2] Nathan Bryant, Bovina, Warren County. Planter.

has passed. Many planters will not plant fruit trees only for their own use; in fact many of them not even that, so that the few who do engage largely in the business will be in no danger of over supplying the demand, and may be assured of ready sales at great profits. Peaches in this vicinity ripen the last of May and through June, July, and August. What is to hinder supplying all the up-river towns with early peaches? As soon as sufficient quantities can be produced to make it an object, arrangements can be made to put the fruit in Cincinnati market in five days from the picking. Of course all nearer towns would be supplied, and this too, several weeks earlier than the orchards in the immediate vicinity would do. Not only peaches can be produced in the greatest abundance at such an early day, but various other kinds of fruit. I have not the least doubt but that more money can be cleared with forty acres of orcharding and four hands, than with ten times the quantity of land and labor devoted to cotton. Besides the immense profits arising from the sale of green fruit, a vast amount may be realized from drying it. Every plantation has plenty of hands, old and young, that could be devoted to this business, which are now worth little or nothing for any other purpose at this season of the year. I do not ask farmers to abandon their other crops for fruit, but that they make it an auxiliary. And I would like to suggest to Mississippi wives that if they will put up a few tons of their surplus fruits in the form of such rich and most beautiful preserves as I have eaten at several of their tables, they could be sure of a ready market in New-Orleans at 25 cents a pound at least. A nice little sum of extra "pin money" might thus be accumulated every year, independent of the cotton bales. Will Mississippians consent to make money at this business of raising fruit? If they do not, and that right soon too, I will take it upon myself to recommend some of the experienced fruit growers of the North to go down and do it for them. They will have no fear of ill health upon your

Warren county hill-sides, and will soon show you how the thing is done. As for "glutting the market," it may do for your children to talk about that—the present generation will not live to see it. The market can never be glutted nor the culture rendered entirely unprofitable, till the price is reduced to ten cents a barrel, and then hogs can be fattened on them. Col. Hebron told me he realized ten dollars a barrel for peaches last year.

I cannot urge this subject too strongly upon the attention of Warren county citizens—I cannot urge it too strongly upon the planters to become *farmers* in the true sense of the word. I cannot urge it too strongly upon Warren county farmers to become shepherds and orchardists if they wish to see their hill-sides descend unimpaired in fertility to their children, instead of descending to the Gulf of Mexico and the gulf of destruction! Orchards, Bermuda grass, and wool, can all grow upon the same soil, while soil and owners will continue to grow rich. At present, if the owners are enriched, the soil is not.

But there are a good many other things that southerners might learn economy in. And one of the first things to learn is, that out of their own staple we furnish them almost every manufactured article, for which they pay us for carrying the raw material from the gin and press we built for them, done up in our bagging and rope, and sewed with our twine and needles, drawn upon our waggons by our horses in our harness, over roads made with our plows and hoes and spades, to our steamboats, and upon that to our ships; not forgetting to let our commission merchants have a good share of "skinnage;" And then after manufacturing, to return it in the same way to exchange for more of the raw material; by all which means we constantly keep a raw spot in your feelings; but it is not yet sufficiently "galled" to teach you to become *home manufacturers*—the only healing salve that you will ever find to cure the festering sore of "such low prices for cotton that planters cannot live by

it." Would you adopt a more prosperous course? Quit planting as you understand it, and become farmers as we understand it—raise upon your farm every thing as far as possible that you eat, drink, wear, and use, and never buy an article of cotton goods except it is of home manufacture—that is, manufactured in the country where the raw material grows—and never bale your cotton in anything but cotton baling made from cotton not worth sending to market in any other shape. Get up and keep up agricultural associations, and give premiums to that farmer who shall come the nearest to raising everything he consumes, and to him who will exhibit the greatest proportion of his negroes clothed in plantation manufacture throughout—and above all things else, read and support agricultural papers.

After leaving Col. Hebron's plantation we passed over another of those great ulcers upon the face of this rich country, a tract of worn out and "thrown out" land,—gullied to death—a frequent sight that the traveller cannot avoid. Then crossing the railroad at "Bovina," a name without a town, but a place that has lately been selected for a site for a cotton factory which I hope will cause the name long to be remembered—then after the fashion of this country, having ridden through sundry plantations, and more than sundry gates, and along a "bridle path" to a new ferry over the Chittaloosa, and through "the swamp," we reached Log Hall, by hard riding, just in time to save us the necessity of spending the night upon a road I should think might be impassible in the dark, and it is next thing to it in day light. But this is one of the ways to get to the worthy Doctor's, and the others are not much better. So we will not attempt to get away again till morning.

Again adieu, SOLON ROBINSON.

Matters in Mississippi.

By Solon Robinson.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 5:114-15; May, 1845]

[February 22, 1845]

Messrs. Editors: To you who know of my wanderings, it may not seem very surprising that I date from this place, but to some of your readers it may not be amiss to assure them in advance, that I am that "same old coon" whose communications have so often been dated from "Lake C. H. Indiana." And how shall I make this communication interesting to my friends up near the north pole? Why first I will tell you what farmers are doing in this latitude now in this month of February. First then, many are busy planting corn! "Planting corn!" I think I hear some of you say, while chopping a "hole in the ice" to water your team preparatory to doing a day's work sledding up wood. "Planting corn!" Why where is the fellow, at the equator? Let's have the map. Ah! true; Mississippi does run pretty well down south, but not quite to the equator. But next, where is "Log Hall," where they are planting corn while we are having such "nice sleigh rides," and hardly thinking of the far off time when we shall be engaged in the same occupation?

Well my friends, I will tell you all about it, if you will wait on me as patiently as nature compels you to do for the coming of that time promised to all climes, "seed time and harvest."

"Log Hall," is in Hinds county, near the centre of the State north and south, about 20 miles from Vicksburgh, and is the residence of Dr. M. H. Phillips, one of the editors of a most excellent agricultural paper, the Southwestern Farmer, published at Raymond in the same county, and besides, a writer and correspondent of the Cultivator and several other agricultural papers, and a gentleman who has done more than any other individual in the south towards "the improvement of the soil and the mind," and is untiring in his efforts "to elevate the

character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil."

And he is one of the very few Southern planters who ever read or think, or improve upon the same plodding system that so generally prevails amongst those that never elevate their own minds above a cotton bale and a curse upon the low price that that same bale now brings them.

But to return to our subject of corn planting, which is now, and as I have observed for several days past, has been in actual progress in the counties north of this. And the weather is much like our most beautiful May, warm, dry and sunny, with an occasional thunder-shower—but no frost. Peach trees I saw in full bloom a week ago, one hundred and fifty miles north of this point, which is about latitude 32, or about ten degrees south of Chicago. The winter, (in fact they have had no winter,) has been a continuation of beautiful sunny days. In fact since the date of my last letter, I have not had but one stormy day to hinder me from traveling and the ground never frozen except a few mornings. The roads in this State—which by appearance and description, are worse *when bad,* than any thing that ever was heard of in the vicinity of Chicago, even—are now very fine, excepting always the continual succession of hills upon hills, that have knocked all my theory of Mississippi being a State of comparatively *level* land, into "a cocked hat," and the said cocked hat into the "middle of next week." Besides the alluvial lands upon rivers, I am now convinced that there is no level land in the north part of the State; and this hilly land is the most inclined to wash and gulley that I ever saw. And the system of cultivation generally pursued is of that kind which may properly be denominated the "leveling system;" and differs only from the system of some politicians, that of "making the rich richer and the poor poorer," that in this case it makes both the rich and the poor land poorer, and the owner poorer than either.

But I did not intend in this letter to say much about cultivation, only as regards time and comparison between this climate and ours.

I stated before that peach trees were in bloom. In truth many of them have shed their bloom, and so have plumb trees, while many of the early trees are putting out leaves—the morus multicalus for instance, (a row of them now being in sight,) are full of leaves as big as a —— *piece of paper.* The swelling buds of the oaks, the prevailing timber, show that the forest will soon be clothed in green, as it now is in grey, by the superabundance of long flowing silver grey Spanish moss. The finest large lettuce grown in the open air I am feasting upon every day, and might have been a week ago, only that it is forbidden by law in Mississippi (the law of indolence,) ever to eat any kind of vegetable matter except "hog and hominy." But of this and much more, shall I not write it down in my "notes of travel."

Plowing is mostly done, if indeed it is not a slander upon the name to call that operation *plowing,* which scratches the ground over about an inch and a half deep, with a "sorter of a thing-um-bob" falsely called a plow, drawn by another sorter of a thing-um called a horse. And here while speaking of plows, let me advise friend Pierce to send a fair sample of his steele plows (with the lowest cash price that they can be delivered at Vicksburgh,) to Dr. Phillips, who will give them a fair trial and report thereon in the Southwestern Farmer, and I have no doubt will open a market for the sale of these plows greater than he can supply. I would recommend friend Gifford also to send one of his Elgin plows. The demand for good light two horse plows, is greater in Mississippi than anywhere else within my knowledge, and in my opinion Illinois can furnish her with plows that the world can't beat. At all events let the trial be made. Many plow makers have sent samples to Dr. Phillips for trial, and certainly they cannot be put in better hands. And let me here state that the Doctor, as well

as many other good farmers, does not put his land through the scratching operation and call it plowing. His standing order is *to plow deep;* a short piece of advice as applicable and almost as much needed in Illinois and Indiana as it is in Mississippi. In fact upon many of our wet prairies, we shall have to use subsoil plow before we shall be fully successful in raising good crops in wet seasons.

Another evidence of the climate and season here I "stop the press" of my lecture upon plowing to answer.

Dr. Phillips has just brought in several stalks of asparagus 15 and 18 inches in length above the surface of the ground. Only think of that, but don't weep, because you are not a resident of the "sunny south." For be assured I can and shall by and bye tell you things about this same sunny south that will make you still more contented to continue to live and enjoy life in our cold and snowy, but healthy north. At all events if we do not enjoy these early garden vegetables, we have no musquitoes cousining around our ears in February, and while the snow is flying and merry sleigh bells jingling, we do not hear the remark from the "gude wife" that some of us have, and some editors that I know of ought to have, "how bad the flies are getting."

Instead of the music of the bells, here is the music of the birds and bees and frogs; not forgetting the lanbs, gamboling over the green pastures of "winter grass," an indigenous growth of the country, as valuable and important in this latitude as our native prairie grass is to us in the north. Indeed we may yet find so formidable a rival in the sheep business among the Mississippi farmers, that they may "draw the wool over our eyes" before many years, but not however until low prices and over production has rubbed the cotton out of theirs.

In truth I have no doubt that sheep will do well here and would now be more profitable than the everlasting and unchangeable cotton crop, that with some excludes almost everything else, even the comforts of life. And

here let me correct an error that prevails to some extent at the north about the luxurious and extravagant manner of living in this cotton growing region.

You nor I, Messrs. Editors, never saw a table set in our houses for hireling or even a beggar, with so little variety of eatables as I have often found in public houses and on plantations where negroes were as "plenty as blackberries." Instead of palaces, log cabins, that among the yankee race would be considered anything but "comfortable," and the living, whew! let us say no more about it. The very thought makes me feel thankful that my present resting place is not among that order—else my visit would be a short one. Whenever you hear any of our northern friends complaining of "hard fare" in a new country, beg of them to follow my footsteps to the south, and if they don't return to their own homes perfectly cured of grumbling, they are certainly incurable, and I shall not undertake to prescribe for their malady again. Notwithstanding what I have stated of early vegetables and warm winter weather here now, and to me the singular appearance of persons going about barefoot and without coats, and as I sit writing in a room with windows all open and the family enjoying the cool shade of the piazza, I know from what I have seen some frosty mornings, that they suffer more with the cold than we do in our frozen country. There we are tempered to the storm—here a chilling blast seems to search them to the heart. An atmosphere at 30 degrees seems colder than it does with us at zero. And then the heat of summer is undoubtedly more severe, certainly harder upon the constitution of man than are the rigors of a northern winter to the inhabitants of the north.

I would like to say something to our Abolition friends of what I have seen in traveling through Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi, but it is a subject that must be kept out of your columns. But at some convenient time after my return, I should be pleased to "tell my experience" before any audience that would be pleased

to listen to a new tale upon a new subject from your old friend.

Log Hall, Mississippi, Feb. 22, 1845.

Notes of Travel in the Southwest—No. IX.

By Solon Robinson.

Mississippi—Visit to Mr. North, Ed. S. W. Farmer—and Mr. Gibson.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:365-66; Dec., 1845[1]]

[Covering March 1-4, 1845]

"There is no rest for the wicked"—and so, as Dr. P. and myself both belong to that family, we are off upon the morning after you and I, my dear reader, last parted company, and our first object is to visit friend North, of the South Western Farmer, at Raymond. We found him in his office sticking type, for to that was he bred. Would you know what manner of man is this southern editor? He is perhaps forty years old—six feet high—slim built—has a very intellectual face and keen eye—and withal, has the organ of benevolence so large that he would gladly see all mankind as happy as himself. To say that he was pleased to see me, conveys but a faint idea of the real enjoyment that my visit afforded him, as I fully believe. Mr. North feels the greatest anxiety to improve the agriculture of the south, and as a natural consequence to elevate the moral condition of the cultivators of the soil. 'Tis for this holy purpose that he has labored several years in publishing the South Western Farmer with a list of subscribers amounting *almost to* 400, and this the only paper devoted to agriculture in the state of Mississippi, or for the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama. It seems a hopeless task to attempt to enlighten such a population; but Mr. North is full of hope, and intends as soon as the present volume is closed, to enlarge and improve the next, and being assisted by the

[1] Printed also in Nashville *Agriculturist*, 6:182-83 (December, 1845).

able and ever ready pen of Dr. Phillips, hopes and believes that the farmers of the south will come up to his aid and sustain the paper. I hope so, but I must own that my hope is not strong.

Raymond is the county seat of Hinds, 16 miles west of Jackson, the seat of government, which is in the same county. It has a court-house and very expensively built jail, and several very humble looking churches. The town does not wear a very flourishing look, and the surrounding land, to my eye, looks decidedly poor; the soil, sandy and white clay, and timber, pine and oak. The surface of this county is, in comparison with the others I have visited, pretty level. It has, upon Chittaloosa on the west, and Pearl river on the east, some very rich bottom land, but subject to inundation, and is yet covered with timber.

After spending two days of most pleasant sociability, the Doctor and I started for Natchez, about one hundred miles southwest. The day previous had been for a great rarity a very rainy one, and during this day we had some very fine sprinkles; so that I began to discover that if they don't have any of our frozen weather, they are not far behind in the mud line.

After leaving Raymond, the land becomes quite hilly in the course of the day, and a great portion of it still bearing its native growth of pine, oak, and some hickory, and upon the creeks, a good deal of sweet gum—the only value of which is, and that ought to be universally known, that a strong tea made of the bark will cure any kind of bowel complaint. The splendid "magnolia grandiflora," in places here is so abundant that it gives the woods a cheerful aspect with its beautiful evergreen leaves. The evergreen holly too, is abundant.

This is the 2d day of March. The oat fields are looking green, and corn begins to show its rows. As is the fashion, we stopped at night with a planter in Claiborne county, by the name of Gadi Gibson. It was dark and showery, and as is also fashionable, we found the number

of visitors "just what might be expected in Mississippi," and thereupon we proposed to withdraw, and not add what seems to us at the north would be a burden. But we were too late. We had told who we were, and we were known by name, and to such a Mississippian's house is never full, and Mr. Gibson is a true one, born upon the soil, now near fifty years old, and as stout and robust as one of the Green Mountain boys of Vermont. Mrs. Gibson is also one of the finest specimens of a healthy woman that I ever saw. To them at least the climate is salubrious. By the bye, I saw at Raymond, a hale and hearty old man of 72, who was born in what is now Mississippi, though then under a foreign government. This man told me he had lived upon the same soil under three governments, English, Spanish, and American. I have no doubt but what it is more the fault of the people than the climate that they suffer with sickness.

Mr. Gibson lives upon a very good plantation, and has, the Lord knows, how many negroes around him, but, as is the fashion, lives in a log cabin, and what appeared a little unfashionable, the owner *takes the papers*. But, as is also the fashion, our lodging room was in "a separate establishment," across the yard from the main centre of the small village that it takes to make up a dwelling place "in these diggings." Another fashion we find here, as is often found hereabouts, and that is the capacity of a Mississippi stable, which is known as *"the lot,"* and is surrounded with a fence sixteen rails high, with a gate of corresponding height, into which said lot are turned all manner of horse flesh, to eat corn out of a capacious trough in the centre, and do their own fighting on their own hook for a position. Corn is the only grain, and corn blades, called "fodder," the only other kind of feed ever given, for which the same trough answers.

Now this is certainly a very primitive kind of stable, and possesses this advantage that it can be enlarged very easily to accommodate the increase of stock. It is also said to be healthy on account of its airyness.

Mr. Gibson keeps his sweet potatoes different from most others. He has a cave cellar, the door being made open work to serve as a ventilator, in which they keep well. The common way is to put them up in "pumps"—a term that I am sure will be as difficult for my northern readers to understand as is the word "chores" here. But the one means a pile of potatoes covered over with dirt, having a hollow log or box bored full of holes, set upon the ground and running out at the top through the centre of the pile, to give ventilation; for without it, sweet potatoes will not keep. At the north, I believe a good way to keep them would be to put them in small parcels with Irish potatoes in a cellar not too warm, but very dry. Or if you can contrive to keep sweet potatoes always dry and warm, they will always keep. The same thing of dahlia roots.

For the accommodation of my southern readers, let me explain that the word *chores* means all the little jobs of work about the house, necessary to be done of a night and morning. Dr. Phillips is so well pleased with its expressiveness, that he has adopted it in his family.

Being naturally an admirer of beauty under whatever form it shows itself, I was attracted to notice a very beautiful lace cap of Mrs. Gibson's, upon which she showed me several others "as fine as silk," and all the work of her own hands—beautiful domestic manufactures.

March 3d—being a little showery, afforded our host an excellent excuse for detaining us another day, and he would have done the same the next—for this is southern fashion, among those who take the newspapers—this being a better criterion to mark civilization "than the use of soap."

Negroes upon large plantations are always under the charge of an overseer. Their wages vary from $250 to $800 a year. A common negro man when hired out, gets from $10 to $15 a month. A woman cook or good house servant the same. A negro carpenter or blacksmith,

from $25 to $45 a month. Corn is now worth from 60 cts. to $1 a bushel, in the interior of the state. Cow peas $1 to $1.50. Sweet potatoes, 50 cts. Irish do., 50 cts. to 75 cts. Oats, 50 cts. Millet, $1, to $1.50. Cotton seed for planting, 50 cts. to $5 a bushel. While at the same time cotton is not worth on the plantations over an average price of 4 cts. a pound.

While off the go ahead track, I will make a memorandum of the weather here in Mississippi since last noticed —this is for comparison with any other place you please.

Feb. 19. Warm, sunny, dry—roads fine, streams low.
" 20. Cloudy—little rain in morning—then clear and cool.
" 21. Mild—somewhat cloudy, and rain at night.
" 22. Cloudy and some rain—mild.
" 23. Mild—flying clouds.
" 24, 25. Sunny and warm—"coats off."
" 26. Quite warm and dry—roads dusty—"jackets off."
" 27, 28.—Clear and mild—fire needed morning and evening.

March 1, 2, 3, I have noticed.

March 4th, which many an office seeker at Washington will be able to remember, and compare with what is past, present, and future, as he hopes it will be—if not warm, at least mild, certainly not stormy—certainly was stormy in Mississippi, in the morning, after which we started again southward over a hilly region composed of argillaceous alluvium, badly cultivated and full of gullies—the streams broad, and gravelly bottoms, deep sunk between high sandy banks that are rapidly working away to help extend our territory farther and farther into the gulf of Mexico. Passed through the town of Port Gibson, which is the best town I have seen in the state. It is situated on a stream called Bayou Peire, a few miles from the Mississippi, from which steamers come in high water to carry out the cotton from the surrounding rich country. Many of the owners of neighboring plantations have

their residences here, which give the place an air of wealth and grandeur.

We passed to-day a few miles north of this town, the "old Indian boundary," where the traveller from New-Orleans entered the wilderness that extended almost to Nashville, Tennessee. This was less than forty years ago. Port Gibson is now about 40 years old, and we stopped all night near Cole's creek, with a man who has lived 40 years upon the same spot—long enough to have learned to live better, and have more of the comforts and conveniences of life around him—*but he did'nt take the papers*—and so there is neither fruit, nor flowers, nor shrubbery, nor garden nor good cultivation, nor has the land upon this "first choice in the country," improved under the constant wearing that it has been subjected to. Happily for the owner, his plantation is nearly level, or after forty years subjection to his constant control, he would now be at work upon the second soil, the top one would have departed. This man is not much in favor of improvement. His place used to be a noted "stand" upon the "trail" from Natchez to Nashville, before the *improvement* in steamboats turned the tide, and stopped the influx of cash into his pocket.

After leaving his house we passed a remarkable stream called "Cole's creek," which we were unable to cross the evening before. When the country was first settled, as our late host told us, "he had often fallen a tree from bank to bank," which are now an hundred rods apart and continually widening, as the soil is so loose that as soon as the roots decay there is nothing to hold it together. And the bed of the stream is so full of quicksands, that crossing after a freshet is both difficult and dangerous, and life and property have both been lost in the attempt. If you ask why don't they bridge it, I beg you to read in your bible that "a certain man built his foundation upon the sands, and the floods came," &c., and so would they come here, and neither bridge or mill dam would stand any more chance to stand, than a cotton

planter stands to grow rich at the present price of the staple.

In the course of the morning, we passed several other branches of this stream of the same character and began to find the country more hilly, the soil of alluvium, and having the same kind of beds of marly loam as noticed in Warren county, and nearly the whole of great fertility and extreme bad cultivation; full of awful gullies, and showing thousands of acres in sight of the road so past the power of a negro to raise cotton upon it, that it is thrown out to the common as utterly worthless. And yet much of this waste land is covered with Bermuda grass, of which I shall speak hereafter—and that in a southern clime affords the finest pasture in the world, and would sustain great numbers of sheep. Cotton—cotton—cotton —till the land is cottoned to death, because cotton is the "great staple," which in the opinion of the cotton planter, only needs to be sustained, and that will sustain all the links of the great chain of commerce—forgetting that the support of that staple, into which it was driven pretty hard a few years ago, was nothing but a "quick sand Bank," and the floods came and the staple drew out, and down went the chain, dragging prosperity and improvement with it. And these cogitations bring us to a gang of 160 negroes working the road, "because it is so wet they can't work on the plantation." And what will such a host do? Not half as much good, though perhaps more labor, as one-tenth the number of yankees with a yankee team, plow and scraper would do.

Some curious features are seen upon this road—upon some of the hills it is worn down in a ditch like a deep cut in a railroad, 20 or 30 feet deep; while the apex is left so sharp that the forward wheels begin to descend before the hind ones have done ascending.

A Mississippi Plantation.

[Albany *Cultivator*, n. s. 3:31-32; Jan., 1846]

[March 6, 1845]

From the last number of our traveling correspondent's "Notes in the Southwest," we give the following account of his visit to Col. J. Dunbar,[1] who has one of the best plantations in that state, situate in Jefferson county, 16 miles east of Natchez. Mr. Robinson says:

He is a very fine hearty man, 61 years old, and was born near Natchez, and came upon the place where he lives now, when the whole country was covered so thick with cane that it was almost impossible to get through it, and commenced with his own hands to clear away a little spot upon which to build his cabin. He was then possessed of a good strong pair of hands, and a wife willing and able to assist him. He has both yet; and he also has upon the "home plantation," 600 acres in cultivation, and works 50 field-hands, and 40 horses and mules, and ten yoke of oxen. He also has two blacksmiths constantly at work, as well as carpenters, wagon and plowmakers, shoemakers, &c.

The whole number of negroes upon the plantation exceeds 150, having several supernumerary, old and young, from another plantation that he owns.[2]

He has about an hundred head of horses and mules, among which are some very fine blooded animals, particularly three breeding mares. He has also a noble jack, 14 hands high, and heavy built. His cattle are not only uncounted, but unaccountable fine—having among them,

[1] Joseph Dunbar, probably the son of William Dunbar who in partnership with one John Ross established a plantation nine miles south of Natchez and four miles from the Mississippi in 1792. William Dunbar first suggested cotton-seed oil and invented a cotton press to make square bales. His plantation "The Forest" was devoted to scientific investigation. See sketch of William Dunbar in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 5:507-8.

[2] The negro quarters are described in Robinson's article, "Negro Slavery at the South," in *De Bow's Review*, 7:381 (November, 1849). This will appear in volume 2.

both Durhams and Ayrshires of good quality. He has a good flock of sheep, and has kept them for 30 years or more, without perceiving any unhealthiness or deterioration. He has now both South Down and Bakewell rams which he bought for full bloods, but in which I think he was cheated, but not by a Yankee.

He also has, he dont know how many hogs, and I am sure I dont; but he raises corn enough "to do him," and make pork enough to supply the plantation, and every year has some bacon and lard to sell. He also raises large quantities of oats, peas and potatoes, and some as good tobacco from Havanna seed, as ever the lover of a good cigar or long stem pipe, puffed into sweet perfume. He cultivates winter oats, clover, Bermuda, blue-grass and rye for pasture, and all of his stock look as though they knew it. The land is very hilly, and was once covered entirely with cane and a growth of white, black and water oak, poplar, ash, hickory, black walnut, dogwood, sassafras, holly, beach, magnolia.

Col. D. has a steam saw-mill, and he assures me that he saved more than the cost of it, in getting lumber for his own buildings. No wonder, for he has a small world of them. His "negro quarters" look like a neat New-England village; and the interior of the dwellings has as much the air of comfort as the exterior. The negroes' food is all cooked in a very large and neat kitchen, immediately under the eye of overseers or owner. There is a large, airy, and excellent building for a hospital. It is also used for the "Christmas Ball" which he gives his negroes every year, accompanied with a feast that many a white man would be glad of a chance to partake of. It is generally contrived to have a few pair of weddings on hand at the same time. Births appear to be "in order" at all seasons.

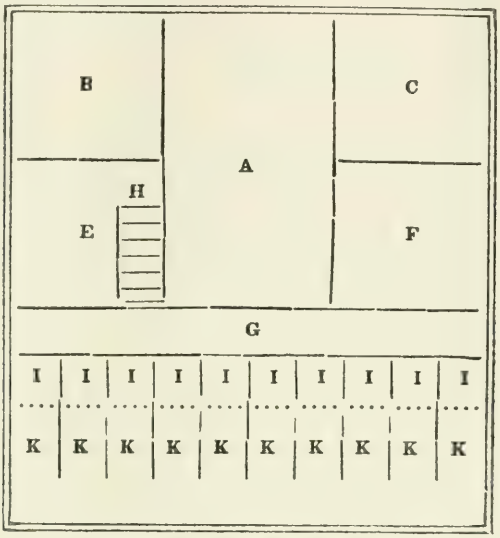
He has a large fine house, and beautiful garden, and good assortment of fruit and flowers, for which the good taste and judicious management of one of the best housewives in Mississippi must have the credit. I was

pleased to see Mrs. D. take pride in showing us her neat dairy room, and long row of barrels of the sweetest lard, besides tallow, and two year old soap; all prepared and put up under her own personal superintendence—and this in Mississippi too—by the wife of a planter worth —well I don't know how much money, but this I do know, that him and his good wife are worth a most comfortable and cheerful disposition that makes all happy around them, and if they have not quiet consciences, I don't know who can have them. Unfortunately they have not a child in the world: but I dare say they won't lack heirs.

Col. D. is satisfied that Spanish tobacco upon such rich, warm land as his, could be made a very profitable crop, if they could only once "kick themselves clear of the traces" that bind them to the cotton-sacks, whether making or losing. And Col. D. assured me that at present prices, he did not make 5 per cent on his capital. And yet, in addition to what I have mentioned, he makes about eight bales to the hand. He puts up his cotton in bagging made of his refuse cotton at the factory in Natchez. A few years ago he sent a crop to market put up in thin boards bound round with ropes like common baling. The cotton bagging is much handsomer and tighter than hemp, but a little more liable to be torn by handling; by the constant use of those abominable cotton hooks, which open great rents in the bags, through which another kind of hooks contrive to hook a kind of rent, though they themselves are all anti-renters. But if cotton planters understood their own interest, they never would use any other than bagging made of cotton that will hardly pay for sending to market. To do this, they must have manufactories right in their midst.

I have visited no place in the south where everything wore so much the appearance of a well ordered "No. 1, Yankee farm," as does every thing about this place. There is but one important thing lacking, and that is a complete system of side-hill ditching.

By way of contrast to the manner of stabling horses last described,[1] I annex a description of Col. Dunbar's carriage house and stable, that will suit other latitudes.



Carriage House and Stable.—Fig. 12.

The building is 40 ft. square, 10 ft. posts. The upper end of the plan, figure 12, is the front end of the building, having a large window in the gable to put in fodder. The carriage room A, is 20 ft. square, and has two set of ten foot doors. Upon each side, B and C, are two rooms ten feet square with outside doors, for saddles, harness, and all kind of horse trappings. Back of these, E and F, are two rooms of the same size, with outside doors and doors opening into the passage G. One of these is for corn, and the other for chopped oats, &c. In one corner of this room the stairs H, open from the passage to the loft.

The manger and feed boxes I, are along side of the passage very convenient for feeding. The back end is divided into stalls K, having each a door from outside.

[1] See *ante*, 481.

The passage being always open, and the sides of the stable part being made of slat-work, gives a free circulation of air; and for aught I coould see, this stable was full as good as a "lot" enclosed with a rail fence. The Col. also has a very large stable with open-work sides for the field horses and mules.

His whole farm, buildings, orchards, garden, yards, quarters, shops, stock, and tools, besides ten thousand little "fixings," are well worth an examination and patterning after by his brother planters, whom I earnestly wish would visit his place and learn that there is nothing in the climate of Mississippi to prevent the existence of thrift, order, neatness, regularity, and consequent comfort upon a cotton plantation.

I must say that I was delighted with my visit of a day to this fine plantation, and could have spent several other days profitably to myself, with a man of such a character for energy, enterprise, and intelligence, and whose laughing eye constantly tells you that there must be no "blue devil-ism" here; and who has a wife of just such a character as I wish every other Mississippian had; and then, like Col. Dunbar, he would have a *home* worthy the name of that sacred place toward which our hearts constantly yearn as we wander over the surface of this rough world.

But I must on! on! on! "There is no rest for the wicked." The day (March 6,) is most lovely, clear and warm, and upon the ten miles to Washington we will make no call, although there are many fine looking places that would be worth our notice; yet there are several others that bear the fatal mark of *"gone to gulleyville,"* and others that are rapidly going the same gate. It is a most singular soil, and when a gulley once begins, it seems to melt down, down, down, into a deep ditch whose sides are as straight and perpendicular as though cut by a spade and line. I have seen ridges standing between these ditches ten feet high, and quite sharp on the top, and only a foot or two thick at the base. It appears never to dry and crumble down, and of course never falls

by freezing, and there they stand, slowly washing down by rain, while upon each side the ditch grows deeper with every shower.

SOLON ROBINSON.

BERMUDA AND COCOA GRASS AND SHEEP IN MISSISSIPPI.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 4:143-44; May, 1845]

[March 21, 1845]

Bermuda Grass.—The cultivation of this grass in the State of Mississippi, I look upon as one of the most important things that can be brought to the notice of the citizens of this State, and probably to most others of the Southern States, where the long continuation of a hot burning sun so completely dries up all other kinds of cultivated grasses, that at that season when grass for pasture or hay is most needed, they will be found more fit to burn than to afford green food; while with the Bermuda, the hotter the sun the more luxuriant the growth; affording not only the finest kind of summer pasture, but yielding an almost inconceivable quantity of excellent hay I am aware that to many of your readers my remarks upon this subject are entirely uninteresting; but I beg of them to consider that there are thousands of others who never saw a spear of this grass growing, and know nothing of its value. Mr. Affleck, of Washington, Miss., who is as well informed upon the subject perhaps as any other person, believes this to be identical with that which forms the beautiful green grassy banks of the river Ganges; and although here only known as Bermuda, that it originally came from the East instead of the West Indies. But be this as it may, it is to the South what Kentucky blue grass is to that State; yet, notwithstanding its vast importance, I have travelled over several counties in Mississippi where it was as completely unknown as if it had never left its original place upon the banks of the "holy river."

One reason why Bermuda grass spreads so slowly is, that it does not bear seed in this country, and conse-

quently is propagated only by the roots and stalks, every joint of which, however, will send up a shoot, and as it grows extends itself with astonishing rapidity both above and below the surface. If set out upon a piece of ground in hills, two feet apart each way, it will spread over the whole ground in one season. Or it may be set in an easier and more expeditious manner, by taking up the sods and chopping them into small pieces, and sowing them over the ground and covering them with a plow or harrow. The tenacity of life in it is so great, that some people object to admit it upon their land, for fear that they never could get rid of it again. In fact, it would seem that they would prefer to see their land taking its rapid course down the millions of gullies through which some of the finest soil in the world is sweeping its way rapidly towards the Gulf of Mexico, rather than risk the trouble of getting this grass into their cultivated fields.

I grant that this grass is a troublesome customer among corn and cotton; but a crop or two of peas will exterminate it, as it cannot live in a dense shade, and that is what adds to its value. *It grows the best in the hottest sun,* no matter whether on wet or dry soil, hill or dale; keep it free of shade, and it will afford more pasturage or hay than any other cultivated grass in a southern clime. In addition to its invaluable quality for food for stock, whether green or dry, it has in Mississippi another and still greater value. For be it known, this is *the land of gullies.* That the whole of the hill counties have not already floated away, is only because the land has been held together by cane and other roots, which all decay as the land becomes cultivated; and even now before the stumps of the original forest have disappeared from the ground, thousands and tens of thousands of acres have become so gullied that their cultivation is abandoned, and in many cases large tracts are turned out to the common as past all profitable use, and considered by the owners as almost valueless; while the annual accumulation of these waste acres under the present system of cultivation is

perfectly astounding to one who has been accustomed to seeing better management. Now the very worst of these waste gullies can be reclaimed into the best of pasture, and the further waste prevented by Bermuda grass alone, and that in one, or at furthest, two years. It will even adhere to the perpendicular sides of banks, and in the bottom of ditches it will grow and collect the wash, and again grow up through the accumulating dirt, and again collect another coat of wash, so that it not only prevents the further waste, but in a measure will fill up many of the smaller gullies already formed.

The Bermuda is an exceedingly valuable grass, and ought to be cultivated universally upon road-sides, embankments of canals, railroads, and levees, to bind them together and prevent their washing away. It is now to be found in the greatest abundance around Natchez and through the hilly land of Adams county. It is also abundant around Vicksburgh, and is considerably spread through several of the river counties of the lower part of the State. Its cultivation ought to be encouraged and extended through every county of this State, as well as all the other Southern States. I do most earnestly recommend every one of your southern readers to take immediate steps to procure a start of this grass, and if they can procure but a single root to begin with, be sure to get that, and they will soon be able to get a stock from which they can in a few years make the most valuable pasture of any other in the south.

Cocoa Grass.—There is another grass that is greatly despised and dreaded here, because, when it takes possession of the land, it can no longer be cultivated in cotton, and not well in anything else. This is the bitter Cocoa. That it is destructive to cultivation I will not dispute; but that the land should be abandoned, as it often is, on account of it, and suffered to go to waste, I shall dispute; because it will take a world of argument and some experience to convince me that a cocoa plantation cannot be made more profitable than a cotton plan-

tation. Throughout all the heat of summer it affords an abundance of most luxuriant pasturage; and throughout the winter it not only affords an inexhaustible supply of food for hogs, but they will actually become fat upon the nut like roots. In addition to this, it can be plowed up in the fall and sowed with rye or winter oats, making the same ground carry a most abundant coat of rich pasturage throughout the year, excepting the few days required to sow the grain and leave it to germinate. Now is this the curse that it is generally accounted here? or is it not rather a blessing sent to drive this cotton crazy community into a system of husbandry that will produce wool almost as cheap per pound as cotton?

Other Grasses—In addition to the above grasses, there are two kinds of winter grass that afford pasturage all winter, to say nothing of a kind of parsley, called chickweed, that clothes the fields in one of the richest coats of pasturage several of the winter months; while no one who has contended in the cotton crop with the undying crab grass, as well as nimblewill, &c., &c., will dispute the fact, that even without the aid of the unfailing Bermuda grass, they could find feed for sheep in summer.

Wool in Mississippi.—Now, in this view of facts, is not Mississippi as well situated for a wool growing country as it is for cotton growing; and instead of grumbling at low prices, cursing the cocoa where it has already taken possession of the land, and looking at its onward march with dread; or witnessing the yearly washing away into gullies of field after field; would it not be more rational and advisable to begin in time to prepare for raising another kind of staple than cotton? And now, ye kind-hearted Mississippians, from whom I have received so many welcomes, and derived the information that has enabled and induced me to give you this advice, don't forget that it is given in all good-will by your old friend SOLON ROBINSON, now at Log Hall, Hinds Co., Miss.

March 21, 1845.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have read the article in your March Number upon Bermuda grass.[1] The description given corresponds with the specimens now before me. Dr. Phillips (at whose house I now am) has grass from Natchez and Cuba which are identical. But instead of "spikes four and five," they are three, four and five, and he thinks he has seen six. Dr. Phillips also says that in a conversation which he has just had with Dr. Naylor, of Warren county, he was assured by that gentleman that he has cultivated land upon his place for four years that was well set in Bermuda grass; and, although he does not exterminate it, that it gives him no serious difficulty in cultivation, and he thinks it is far more dreaded than it should be.

The Reviewers Reviewed.

By Solon Robinson.

[Chicago *Prairie Farmer*, 5:152-53; June, 1845]

[May 2, 1845]

Messrs. Editors: A word with you. Firstly you see I date from home again, where I arrived five days ago, having performed a two thousand mile tour in the States of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas; during which I have had an opportunity to see many things that I expected I might be able to interest your readers with a description of. But I am deterred from the effort, for fear that I might happen to speak of some contemptible little dull village through which I passed, as *"not a very promising one,"* and for which I should get as bad a "cat-hauling" as I did in your April number for the half dozen lines that I devoted to the notice of a certain village,[2] (I must not call names any more, I suppose,) in a style of language that would have provoked a laugh instead of the angry *ad captandum* one that it has, if every word I said

[1] *American Agriculturist*, 4:90-91.

[2] See *ante*, 424 n.

had not been the truth, those "75 newspaper subscribers" to the contrary notwithstanding. How many of them are residents *in* the said village? If I have done the citizens of that village "injustice," it was not intentional, and until called upon in a more friendly style, and by one who dares to take the responsibility of writing over his own proper name, I shall make no apology, and am sorry that you have taken the trouble to make one in my behalf. And to save you the trouble of printing any thing in my communications "against your intentions," and to prevent doing "injustice" in future, and save you from "omitting," I will "qualify" myself to *omit* altogether. But I feel bound to "rub some of the Lake county sand out of my eyes and look" at your reviewer. Though for the life of me I don't see how I could have got so much sand into the same place that you had previously filled with dust.

Now, as I conceive, the object of reviewing any work is to draw attention to any valuable parts it may contain, and point out errors committed by the writer, to prevent his conveying false information to his readers; taking especial care himself to word his language so that "every one who runs may read" the truth in all his statements. Now, Mr. Reviewer, having "rubbed" out a quantity of that "sand" which you convey an idea to your readers composes the soil of Lake county, and is so unproductive that one farm on the American Bottom will produce more than half the county, I will proceed.

First, then, Mr. Reviewer, do you make this statement for fact? for reviewers are not allowed the "poetical license" that is conceded to descriptive travelers: because if it is a fact, I shall advise the citizens of Lake county to rub the sand out of their eyes and discover that the land which they have for years supposed to be a somewhat too wet clayey soil, though very productive, and affording some of the best wheat taken to the Chicago market, has been changed by the *"presto"* of the Prairie Farmer reviewer, into a barren sand; and to save them-

selves from starvation, they had better emigrate at once to the far-famed American Bottom, which I consider is very productive of corn and ague-and-fevers of all names and grades, and as pooly formed and as destitute of what Yankees call "comfortable living," as can be found in all *Suckerdom.* Now although I did not "distress myself with the American Bottom," yet you have placed me and my fellow citizens of Lake county in a very distressing situation.

And I am "invidious," too, am I? Well, that distresses me more than all the rest—and I'll try to improve. And I'll make no more comparisons between Vermonters and North Carolinians, saving my own private opinion, that the latter in the matter of "corn bread and common doings," can beat all the Yankee nation, though some of the latter, after they become Suckers, get about as uncomfortable as those to the "manor born." My prayer is that "intermarriage" will be fruitful in "setting these matters to rights"—it's needed.

One more item. It must have been painful news to my friend Brewster[1] to hear that I had *"run away to Missouri."* He will doubtless be pleased to know that I have run back again, having only got into one penitentiary while I was gone;[2] from which I escaped, and where I saw the only true illustration of the "non-enclosure system;" that is, every one to fence *in* his own, and not fence *out* his neighbors' animals. This is the system that we contend for—but one upon which I shall not write, while answered with abuse and sarcasm instead of argument. I leave the matter to the more able pen of A. B. Allen, Esq. of the American Agriculturist.

I am glad to hear that "there is no more danger of sheep getting short of feed than the birds short of

[1] Edward W. Brewster, Kane County, Illinois, treasurer of the Union Agricultural Society of northeastern Illinois in 1843, and corresponding secretary in 1844; contributor to *Prairie Farmer* and Albany *Cultivator;* postmaster of Little Woods, Kane County, 1842-1850.

[2] See *post,* 503.

breath." I wish it was true. But if those who depend upon prairie grass for fall feed, don't get the wool drawn over their eyes," then I will acknowledge the sand in mine, and will even believe that sheep can live and grow fat upon the "dry fog" on the prairie in the fall of the year, just as well as——the birds could breathe the same material and live. The want of fall feed has killed more sheep than all the diseases that ever prevailed on the prairies, wolves and dogs included. And unless some better provision is made by prairie farmers to sustain their sheep through the fall months, I don't think *they* will "care who owns the land," nor their owners either. The doctrine that sheep can do well enough upon prairie grass alone, has been preached long enough, and I am glad to see you, Messrs. Editors, mowing you way into it. It is time it was cut down—for all who have depended upon it have felt the blighting effects of a hard frost—*in their pockets.*

And here is my opinion about the vignette of your last volume, which served for "a looking-glass" for your reviewer to see Suckerdom in. Well, if that is a true sketch from any known spot, I should like to have a look at the original—until which I shall continue to believe that it gives just as true a view of a new settlement on the prairies as could be seen from the top of Mount Pisgah. I'm glad it's worn out—for to me, it always "looked a lie," which conveyed an impression to the minds of "inquirers who think of emigrating here" contrary from "a true sketch from nature." I have no objection to your getting a new one, whether it be a view of "starved rock," or the view of any other spot where starvation ensues from the miserable manner of cultivation of the richest soil in the world: not forgetting to add that sheep can live just as well upon starved rock as upon frost bitten prairie grass. I object to a view of the "Indian mounds on the American Bottom," until it is proved that they are really Indian mounds, instead of mounds formed by the action of water. As to hedges, I shall believe that neither

the English nor native thorn will succeed in making a good and durable fence, till I see it proved. But I like to see the subject agitated about fencing in all possible and impossible ways; for to one certain result will it lead at last, and that is—no fence at all. But not till a few more hundred millions of dollars have been spent upon the present miserable system.

And now, having despatched this matter "with a word and a blow," and as I think "according to the merits of the case," I have nothing to add, only that being done over by your critics, I have done with them. "Let the hardest fend off."

Lake C. H., Indiana, May 2, 1845.

Mountains and Moralizing—Politics—Penitentiary and Peaches—and Other Things.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, June 4, 1845]

"At Home," Lake C. H., Ia., May 12, 1845.

My old Friends:—I did not write you "from the mountains of Tenn," as I insinuated in my last[1] that I intended to do, because I did not find myself on the top of any of them that were high enough to elevate my ideas to the starting point. And I did not write from the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, because I did not choose—like some travellers I know of—to write of things that I have not seen. I was turned aside from my purpose, by letters at Nashville, that hurried me onward toward that place, to which the sensitive mind of every husband and father so earnestly yearns to return, particularly when he hears that sickness and distress has entered in his absence, and that there was a messenger in the neighborhood summoning many of the wanderers of the earth to go with him to a home from which they would never wander again. And to this home we are all hastening with a speed that should warn us to choose that road which will

[1] Letter of March 23, 1845, in *Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, April 4.

enable us, while nearing the last end of our journey, to pass over a route less rough, rocky, mountainous and miserable than I found in the north-western part of Alabama and part of Tennessee, and finally terminate, as did my present one, upon the beautiful green and flowery prairie, and by the side of groves sending forth the fragrance of early spring flowers. However tempestuous may have been the weather, or however rough and ragged may have been the mountain paths of our youthful journey, the ripened wisdom of mature life is given us to point out a smooth and even path that will lead us to a peaceful and happy home at last. And as men set up along the highways of the world guide boards to point out the right road to the traveller, so let me say to the multitude upon the great thoroughfare through life, that there is a *universal guide board* which they can easily obtain, when first setting out upon their long journey, that will be far more useful than all that they will find by the road side, to keep them upon the straight forward and true path, and bring them home at last; and these are the golden letters thereon:

"Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you."

But I am wandering from the road upon which I started, and must quit moralising, and return to speak of things more interesting to that numerous class of travellers who "take no thought of the morrow."

As I hinted above, I will here say, that I found the road from Columbus, Miss., which is a very pleasant town on the Tombigbee river, to Florence, Ala., one of the most rough, rocky, mountainous and poorly worked roads that I know of in the West. The distance is about 120 miles, and with the exception of one once rich, and now poor valley of a few miles, the whole distance is as poor a region of land as poverty could wish, until within some 8 or 10 miles of Florence where we come down a mile long mountain-side into the broad valley of the Tennessee, which 25 or 30 years ago could boast as rich and

mellow soil as ever improvident man killed with cotton and carelessness.

I believe, Messrs. Editors, if you could be shown at one view the almost incalculable amount of waste of rich soil that the cultivation of cotton has produced, that you would readily come to the conclusion that according to the true definition of political economy, (the procuring for all the subjects of a government the greatest amount of wealth, civilization, and happiness,) that the government of the United States are more millions of dollars poorer this day than they ever produced bales of cotton.

And if the present system of clearing up new land and cultivating in cotton until it will no longer produce a crop, is persisted in for only one little short century, our posterity need not trouble themselves about "over-production," for the whole South, Texas included, will be too poor to produce a supply. And about that same period of time, when man has made the valleys as poor, as the rocky, gravelly, sandy hills of north-werstern Alabama now are, it is highly probable that the United States will be able to sell their land in that region without reducing the price, if they will continue to persevere in their present hold-on-for-high-price policy. For it is a fact that there are thousands of acres of this land that are not worth as many cents an acre as government asks dollars.

From Florence to Nashville, 115 miles, the first half of the road passes over a continuation of the same hard featured country and rough hilly roads, and comparatively poor soil. Upon the remainder of the route we have a Macadamised Turnpike, with a very ridiculous tariff of tolls—charging the same price for a light two horse buggy as for a 6 horse wagon, loaded with twenty bales of cotton. As might be expected, to save tolls, wagons carry excessive heavy loads, to the great injury of the road. The most beautiful land lies between Mt. Pleasant and Columbia, known as the "Polk neighborhood," where some of the relations of the President live in a style of wealthy elegance, equal, and undoubtedly

more happy, than him who has risen from comparative obscurity, and a very modest little old frame house in Columbia, to the National palace at Washington, and all the attendant luxury of those who dwell in high places.

"The President's house"[1] is pointed out to the passing traveler, to prove that there is no "national aristocracy" in this country, and that we can "pick up" when we please, an individual that is so little known to fame, that a universal cry is heard of "who is he?" and elevate him to a greater and more enduring honor than was enjoyed by his prototype the fisherman King of Naples. From present appearances, it seems likely that some of the guillotined subjects of the present monarch will be able to remember not only who he is, but who placed him where he is. And yet I have no doubt but they will be ready again to swallow the gilded bait of the next fisherman that throws his barbed hooks into the muddy stream that for several years has been insiduously washing away its "banks," and spreading its sickly waters over the fields of Native American industry—notwithstanding they were composed of the firmest "Clay."

But I will leave Columbia and "Columbia's favored son," and wend my way along through the fertile, limestone, clayey hills and richly cultivated vales to the city of rocks and red cedars—the capital of Tennessee—with its estimated ten thousand inhabitants of white and black and shades between. Nashville is a pleasant and improving town, built upon rocks so destitute of soil that many of those who are disposed to set out ornamental trees are obliged to blast a hole in the rocks and cast on soil. I noticed that in laying the leading pipes from the waterworks through the streets, in many places the rocks have to be blasted out of the trench. One of the greatest ornaments of the place are the native cedars, which the good taste of a few of the citizens have carefully preserved,

[1] James Knox Polk was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, November 2, 1795. He moved to Tennessee in 1806 and began the practice of law at Columbia in 1820.

while the greater organ of destructiveness which unfortunately exercised a ruling influence over the many, has swept the barren rocks of nature's lovely robe of green, which carelessness will not restore again. Upon one of the highest knobs, still covered with a lovely grove in all of the beauty of nature, it is intended to rear a magnificent State-house, which will overlook the town and surrounding country. The stone of which it is to be built, are now preparing by the convicts in the near-by Penitentiary, which at present supports about 180 well fed and clothed and lightly worked, healthy looking prisoners. From what I saw of the comforts of this prison, I would advise those who are determined to spend a few years in quiet retirement from the busy, bustling world, that they cannot do better than emigrate to this State, and apprentice themselves to learn an excellent trade. But I would further advise them that however comfortable it may be, it is not considered at all respectable to take board and lodging in this public house. But there is a new institution about 5 miles from Nashville in which if our youth could all be educated, I am confident that few of them would ever be found serving an apprenticeship to trades taught by the State. This is Franklin College,[1] an agricultural school just commencing the experiment of keeping students employed to keep them out of mischief, and that to learn to labor is more useful and less disgraceful than some of the scenes of riot that we have lately heard of in Southern Colleges. I will at some future day give you some account of Franklin College, that I have no doubt will be interesting to you. I was in the vicinity of Nashville at the time of the frost on the 8th April, and I find from there through Tennessee, Kentucky and all up the Wabash Valley, that

[1] A school begun in 1843 at Elm Crag, five miles southeast of Nashville, chartered as a state institution in 1844. The Reverend Tolbert Fanning was founder and superintendent. The curriculum included languages, sciences, agriculture, and the mechanical arts. See Nashville *Agriculturist*, 4:30 (February, 1843); 4:78 (April, 1843); 5:173 (November, 1844); 6:154 (October, 1845).

nearly all the fruit was killed, excepting late Apples: but that in this vicinity there was a promise of an abundance. But promises, as some newspaper publishers have amble proof of, are rather uncertain dependences, and so are Peaches: for the frost of 7th of May has made them just as valuable as the promises aforesaid. The frost of April 8th injured the Wheat in the latitude of Nashville, and I am fearful that that of May 7th has injured some of the most forward crops in this region. I never mean to "croak," but from personal observation and other information, I am constrained to believe that the present growing crop of wheat in the United States will be a light one.

Snow in May.—On the 7th of May in latitude 41½°, near the head of Lake Michigan, there was "a right smart" "flurry" of snow—not quite enough to make good *sledding*—but more than we wished to see.

There are several other matters that I had intended to touch upon, but am compelled to refrain from for fear of doubling a tax already doubly too much, and which I very much fear will not be permanently cured by the very inefficient "reform" so called, in the Post Office law. When the wisdom of Congress, show wisdom and honesty enough to abolish their own franking privilege, and fix a uniform prepaid rate of postage upon all letters mailed, of 5 cents, and thereby abolish one half of the expenses of the Post Office Department, then will the reform prove successful, notwithstanding the bitter denunciations of "the friends of the people;" and then you will be able to hear more often from your old friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

LETTER FROM SOLON ROBINSON—SOMETHING NEW—IMPROVEMENTS IN THE TYPOGRAPHICAL ART.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, July 23, 1845]

[July 1, 1845]

Messrs. Editors:—When Solomon said there was nothing *new* under the sun, he referred to the age in

which he lived, and not to this go-ahead age of progressiveness, when nothing new can long remain new, for even you and I are growing old.

But before I get any older I am going to describe to you "something new," and useful, too, But I shall take my own way to do it.

When I was on my way home from the land of cotton bags, I made a small detour from my route for the sake of calling on my old friend, Josiah Warren, at New Harmony, Indiana, who, whatever may be said of him by those that know least of him, about "his visionary notions of reforming society," has an abundant share of the inventive genius that is inherent with the "sons of New England."[1]

I found friend Josiah in his laboratory, sanctum, or work-shop, which undoubtedly bears a very strong resemblance in many particulars to the shop of that other ingenious Yorker, that Washington Irving immortalized Jabez Doolittle, just before the "first locomotive" started upon its never ending journey over the face of this continent. That was "an experiment." What was ever accomplished without an experiment? For 17 years, Josiah Warren has been an experimenter, and mostly with one object in view—the cheapening the printing power. For a while he thought to effect this by cheapening the press —being one of the means necessary to effect that benevolent object. At length he became convinced that this would not produce the desired effect, and he then turned

[1] Josiah Warren, born in Boston in 1798; died April 14, 1874. Inventor, social philosopher, peaceful revolutionist. Met Robert Owen at Cincinnati in 1824 and joined his experiment at New Harmony, Indiana. About 1840, constructed the first press ever used to print newspapers from a roll. Extended stereotyping inventions to all varieties of printing and reproduction. See Lockwood, George, *The New Harmony Movement*, 294-306 (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1905); *The New Harmony Communities*, 225-41 (The Chronicle Co., Marion, Ind., 1902). Manuscript and printed materials relating to Warren are preserved in the Library of the Workingmen's Institute at New Harmony, Indiana.

his attention towards discovering a substitute for type metal, which he has at length done, and by which a complete revolution will be produced in the typographical art, particularly in the stereotyping process. Though I do not wish to be understood to mean that his discovery is confined to the stereotyping process. He has discovered a new material for matrices, and a new method of making them, as well as a new material of which to form the plates. And what is remarkable is, that his process is so simple that you can, in your office, form and original design of any subject capable of being illustrated by letter press printing, as well as taking a cast of anything you may choose to put in form with type, which is done in a few minutes; and after the matrix is made, you can cast a plate by the heat of the common stove, and within fifteen minutes from the commencement of the operation, have a perfectly finished plate perfectly fitted to a block and on the press taking off impressions.—And what is still wonderful, the blocks do not require any perfect fitting. And the plates made from this new metal are more hard and more tough, and will wear as long as those made from common type metal, and do not cost one fourth as much.—Finished plates and blocks to stereotype pages 5 by 10 inches, the inventor will contract to furnish and warrant for a sum not exceeding perhaps five cents each.

But the great benefit that will accrue to the craft, arises from the fact that every printer can make his own stereotype plates, as well as plates from original designs, at a very trifling expense in his own office.

Steps are already taken to secure the patent, when the invention will be offered to the public.[1]

An agent is also on his way to Europe to secure patents there.

So that after years of toil and expensive experiments,

[1] Warren's discovery was patented April 25, 1846. See *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents, 1846*, 145, 171, 240 (*Executive Documents*, 29 Congress, 2 session, 3:doc. 52).

a result has been achieved that I hope will not only be benificial to the craft, but the whole human family, and that some of that same family will amply remunerate the inventor for the benefits they may receive from him.

I send you enclosed four imprints of a picture.—Three are from the original stereotype plate, and the other is from a plate made from the original in the new type metal. Will you please to state if there is any and what is the difference—(allude to Nos.) I expect to be in Cincinnati in a few weeks, and I shall then make known to you many other things connected with this subject, and get you to put the new metal to the test of such proof as will enable you to speak advisedly upon the subject, and if you then become as well satisfied of the value of the improvement as I am, I am sure that you will lend your influence not only to promote the welfare of society, but to reward a worthy artisan who has spent the best years of his life in accomplishing this improvement. If we find the freight is worthy of such a conveyance, let us load the invention upon the never ceasing, ever running locomotive of Jabez Doolittle, and send it forth to do much good as it speeds through the wide world.

July 1, 1845. SOLON ROBINSON.

NEW HARMONY, IA.—RAPP—R. OWEN—THE LAND ABOUT THERE, AND A WORD OF THE OLDEN TIME.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, July 30, 1845]

ON BOARD STEAMER ORPHEUS,
BELOW LOUISVILLE, July 26, 1845.

Messrs. Editors:—As this boat shakes so bad that it shakes all the ideas out of my head in a heap, you must expect them to fall upon the paper in a very confused mass, which you can hardly decipher.

I wrote you twenty days since from Vincennes.[1] Notwithstanding that the water was so high in the Wabash,

[1] Robinson's letter of July 6, dealing chiefly with the crops in western Indiana, appeared in the *Gazette* of July 22, 1845.

I could not meet with a boat, and had to pursue my way down by stage over very bad roads, made so by the floods of rain. I continued to find the condition of the wheat as I described it in my last. Finding so little wheat in sack, led to inquiry and information that it is preferred to let it remain in the shock until it can be threshed, on account of the wevil, which are a very great pest hereabouts. After threshing, the grain is carefully screened before putting away, and that does not always save it. I am told that mixing a little powdered lime with it is a preventive.

At Graysville, Ill., about a dozen miles from New Harmony, whither I was bound, I came to a dead halt. The great flood of White River had overflowed the Wabash bottom, so as greatly to injure crops and entirely stop traveling; what was very provoking, I arrived fifteen minutes too late for a steamer, and no other one above. Here was a quandary—or a *waterdary*. But fortune smiled upon me in the shape of a downward-bound canoe, into which I stowed my trunk and seated myself upon it, and took to the current in a sun not quite hot enough to melt iron.

New Harmony has been one of the most celebrated towns in the State of Indiana. It was first settled by "Rapp's[1] community," in 1814, and during the ten years that they remained here they performed wonders. Firstly, they had to erect temporary dwellings, clear and fence the lands, build mills, cotton gins and factory, for they raised cotton, and also wine. They also erected a very good frame church. But soon the spirit of permanent improvement began to develop itself in brick dwellings,

[1] George Rapp, born November 1, 1757, in Würtemburg, Germany; died August 7, 1847. Immigrated to America in 1803 and founded a colony in Butler County, Pennsylvania. Organized the Harmony Society, a communistic theocracy. The colony moved to the Wabash Valley, now the site of New Harmony, Indiana, in 1814. In 1824 they sold their lands to Robert Owen and returned to Pennsylvania where they established a settlement called Economy. See sketch in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 15:383-84.

and monster boarding houses, barns and granaries. A building that still bears the name of the "old Dutch granary," was undoubtedly built for a fortification or place of refuge from an attack of the surrounding population, who seem to have been actuated by the same spirit that affected the Missourians towards the Mormons in latter days. This building is an immense structure, the lower story, and that a very high one, is of stone, and the upper ones of brick, the sides being pierced with very small and strongly grated windows. Tradition says that a subterranean passage led from this building to others in the town. This building is now occupied by Dr. Owen[1] for a labratory and mineralogical cabinet, and very valuable one it is, and well worthy the attention of scientific men. It is also a very great pity that a man of such valuable attainments as Dr. Owen should be allowed by the public, who need his knowledge, to waste his talents, hid under such a little bushel as they are in this town. But enough of men and more of things.

One of the most curious and remarkable of the Dutch buildings is "the Hall." "They say" that the old patriarch Rapp had a dream, or a vision, or command of God, Jo. Smith[2] like, to build him a house—and it was built and remains a great monument of what religious enthusiasm can do. The building is of two high stories, with great wine cellars under, and is built of brick with stone win-

[1] David Dale Owen, son of Robert Owen, born in Scotland, June 24, 1807; died at New Harmony, November 13, 1860. Studied geology and natural sciences abroad. In 1837, commissioned by Indiana General Assembly to make a preliminary geological survey of the state; in 1839, appointed geologist of the United States. Headquarters of the United States Geological Survey were for a time at New Harmony. Estabrook, Arthur H., "The Family History of Robert Owen," in *Indiana Magazine of History*, 19:88-89; *Dictionary of American Biography*, 14:116-17.

[2] Joseph Smith, born Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, December 23, 1805; died Carthage, Illinois, June 27, 1844. American Mormon leader and founder of the church of the Latter-day Saints. He was murdered during religious strife at Carthage. See Pease, *The Frontier State*, 340-52.

dows and door frames, very substantial, and is in the form of a cross, with equal length wings, and I should judge about 120 feet through the center and 60 feet across the wings. The lower room is paved and was all in one room until lately one wing has been walled off, and is used as a lecture room and library &c., belonging to the "Working Men's Institute." Owing to prevailing sickness, Rapp's community became dissatisfied with the location, and in 1824 sold out to Robert Owen; whose attempt and failure to form a community is well known. He sold a part of his purchase to Wm. Maclun,[1] since dead. Mr. Maclun's brother and three of Mr. Owen's sons reside here upon portions of the property; the most of it having been sold out "in lots to suit purchasers." There is nothing remaining here of the community system. Rapp is, I believe, still living among his associates at Economy, on the Ohio, below Pittsburgh, whither they went from Harmony, and where they have grown exceedingly wealthy, or rather increased the great wealth that they took from here. For if I recollect aright, Mr. Owen paid them about a quarter of a million of dollars.

The land hereabouts is very fertile, though back from the river it is quite broken and seems to be underlaid with a very rich bed of marl that crops out in many of the ravines, and may be resorted to in time for fertilizing the surface.

Well, well, here I am upon the fourth page—quite enough for me, unless it were better.

This boat is crowded with passengers. There is 3½ feet of water at French Island bar and about the same at

[1] William Maclure, born October 27, 1763, in Ayr, Scotland; died March 23, 1840. Pioneer geologist and patron of science and education. Became a citizen of the United States in 1803. President, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 1817. Became interested in Owen's projected community at New Harmony, Indiana. Purchased land and persuaded other scientific men to accompany him to New Harmony. Founded New Harmony Working Men's Institute in 1838. Died in Mexico. See sketch in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 12:135-37.

some of the others—close shaving—she has rubbed hard several times, but does not stick. The river is falling.

I hope to see you soon, and then I have more to say. Till then I remain your old friend

SOLON ROBINSON.

NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SHOW AT UTICA

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, Sep. 27, 1845]

UTICA, N. Y., Sept. 17, 1845.

Editors of the Cincinnati Gazette:

I have not written as I promised. My excuse is a good one—I have been very sick—cholera morbus—nearly six weeks of a short and fleeting life lost to labor, but not to thought. A sick bed is a favorable place to think; but far from pleasant to think we are perhaps on a death bed, far from home, alone and uncared for, among strangers. Reader! let me conjure you, as you love life and the Great Author of it, let no opportunity pass away into the ocean of time lost, neglecting to be a "good samaritan" "to the (sick) stranger within thy gates." But this is not what I write for. 'Tis a homily instead of *a note from the New York State Agricultural Show at Utica.*[1]

This is the morning of the second day—yesterday was principally devoted to getting ready.—Many of the great "stock trains" arrived Monday, and since then there has been a continued influx, not only of horned but "human cattle," until the opportunity for accommodations is not much better for one than for the other. Even when I arrived on Monday evening at "Bagg's Hotel," the great mastadon of Utica taverns, every room was engaged and I thought myself exceedingly fortunate to get, not a "single room," but a single bed in a room with only six companions. Where the thousands have been stowed away that have arrived since, passeth my understanding.

[1] The *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:313-15 (October, 1845) contains a full account of the fair.

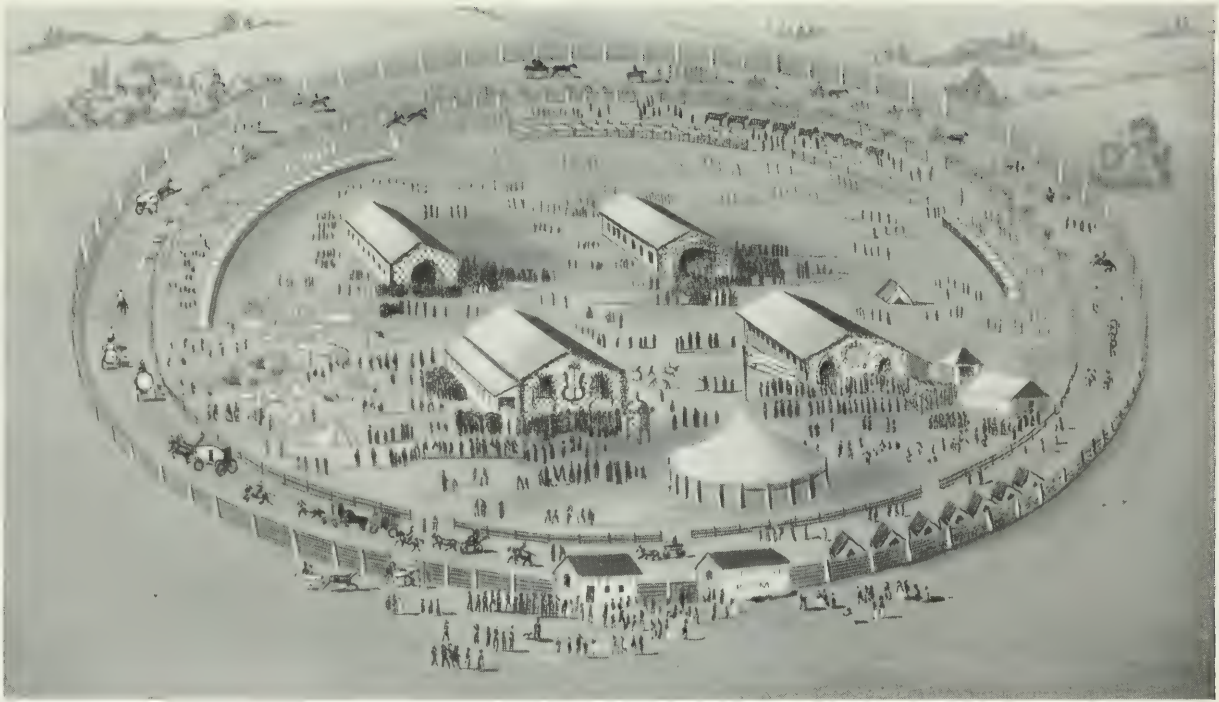
Many of those that came in about midnight last night, if they slept at all, must have done so while they kept moving, which they had to do to keep warm, for, be it known, that it is cold weather up here, even to repeated white frosts. And notwithstanding all these crowds of men, women and children, to-day is the day when the mass are expected to begin to arrive. Most of the other States are well represented. I hope that they may all carry home some of the spirit that animates the agriculturists of this great State.

The show ground is upon a beautiful spot of ground about a mile from the principal hotels, on the west side of the city.

The collection of stock now in pasture near the show ground is great and looks fine, notwithstanding the great drouth that has visited this as well as every other part of the United States this season. I am told that the low condition of much stock will prevent the very great show that otherwise would have been.

But if I may judge by the vast sample of cheese and butter on show, there must have been good feed somewhere. Many of the specimens in the fruit and vegetable departments made a goodly show. Flowers are not quite so pretty as some of those that were engaged all of yesterday arranging them. Women ought to constantly bear in mind that their race first sprung into existence *in a garden,* and that that was undoubtedly a flower garden of the most beautiful order, and that they never appear so lovely as when in the same place or amid the products of it.

The number of agricultural implements is not so great as I expected, but among them are some valuable ones and some that are only good specimens of mechanical skill rather than usefulness. Those that "get up" (that is the fashionable term,) agricultural machinery ought to study simplicity and durability instead of the powers of complicated machinery that inevitable will get out of



SHOW GROUND, STATE FAIR, UTICA, NEW YORK, 1845

[Adapted from New York State Agricultural Society *Transactions*, 1845, p. 7]

order in a short time after it falls into our unskilful hands upon the farm.

Although I do not intend to particularise, I will say that I think Hussey's reaping machine ought to be more known and used upon our smooth western land. There is a stump machine that cost $60 only and has power to pull the largest pine stump—although we at the west haven't many pine stumps to pull do sometimes talk about making roads among stumps that ought to be pulled out of the way.

10 O'CLOCK.

Another train of cars just in from the East is discharging its immense multitude upon the streets, surpassing anything in the "crowd line" that we are able to "get up" on any of our lines of public conveyance at the west.

But this is only an item—now let us go again to the ground and there we *shall* see a crowd—slowly—for here is such 'show' of wagon wheels that it needs care to be sure that we don't get six wheels to our carriage.

Every avenue from the country is full of all manner of moving things. How would the ancient Oneidas wonder at the productiveness of the pale faces in the way of "multiplying and replenishing the earth," if they could return this day to their old hunting ground.

As we approach the enclosure the whole of the surrounding ground seems to be covered with all sorts of shantees with all manner of eating and some little drinking "I reckon," though the latter I am happy to say is not in the ascendant. The "outside barbarians" have also an untold number of "rare shows" from "the biggest horse in the world" down to the smallest specimen of gambling for a "single or double" stick of candy.

But let us look inside—what shall we see?—a great display of—ten acres of human beings that so crowd around and hide all the articles of exhibition, and fill up all the avenues, that, feeble as I am, I cannot venture to endure such a perfect "jam" long enough to give you an

idea of what is to be seen, because it is not to be seen, so I have retired to a "shady spot," for at this, 12 o'clock, the sun pours down in such fervor as only is to be felt after a frosty morning, and at a table provided for the accommodation of "we gentlemen of the press." I finish this letter thus far, for no farther can I go, and you must take the will for the deed, unless indeed I may hereafter find elbow room enough to give you another epistle from your old friend.

SOLON ROBINSON.

NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SHOW AT UTICA—CONTINUED

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, Oct. 1, 1845]

UTICA, N. Y. Sept. 18th, 1845.

Messrs. Editors.—This is the third and last day of the great fair. We have had two beautiful days, the first rather cool, but clear and bracing with a frosty night, followed by a most lovely, clear and rather too warm a day yesterday; while the promise this morning is a little in favor of rain. When you understand that this Fair is held in the center of a county containing a population of 90,000, with a railroad and canal running through, which poured in its tens of thousand more, as I noted yesterday, you will not be surprised that there were 40,000 to visit and help make up the "great show"—and I speak advisedly, when I say that I never saw a finer collection of the human family together. The mass was made up of the families of the actual cultivators of the soil, and their wives and children, and men servants and maid servants, all neat and comfortably clad, and I must say in most cases, displaying a little too much of the products of foreign workshops, and too little of the real homespun of our own homes. But one thing I remarked, there was a very small percent. of the genuine loafer variety, and only just enough of the aristocracy, (for we have an aristocracy in this country, notwithstanding our

boast of Democracy,) to give the whole mass an interesting variety.

But of the "featherless bipeds" *quantum suf.*

The show of Durham Cattle falls short I am told of former years, both in quantity and quality, which I hope from the appearance of those on show is the fact, and that it will prove equally true in regard to future years. Although this stock is not a favorite of mine, I like to see it in the hands of those who can afford to keep it—the mass of farmers cannot. There are some beautiful Devons and Herfords upon the ground, either of which I prefer for the universal use of farmers, to the Durhams; but give them the palm for beef. There is also a good show of the common cattle and work Oxen of the country around.

Connecticut carries off the palm for a show of fine wool Sheep, not because New York had not as good that might have been shown, if their owners had had public spirit enough to bring them forward—a spirit that I must say is greatly lacking among many—though among a few, language is not strong enough to commend sufficiently for their labor in support of and building up of this society.

The show of Horses is highly creditable, and shows that there are some valuable animals that look as though they were designed for the farmer instead of the racer's use.

There is quite a porkerish show of Swine, and some very great quacks ducking their heads to their gabling gooseish neighbors from all countries and climes brought here to keep company with some of the most beautiful domestic fowls, pigeons, &c. &c. So much for the living things, and now for the things upon which we live. The greatest amount of this is Cheese, of which it will be difficult to find a better looking display. Not being on the tasting committee, I cannot give an opinion upon this most important point. Butter is not abundant but very fine in appearance, and owing to the drouth high and

likely to be higher in price—so look out, if you have any to spare in dried up Ohio.

Of Maple Sugar, I never saw anything handsomer—equal to best refined. There is also two barrels of very pure and handsome Salt made by a new patented process.

Among the machinery, one of the most useful articles that I shall take notice of, is a windlass for drawing water, and a very simple contrivance to empty the bucket by the motion of the windlass.

Cooking stoves, as usual upon all such occasions, are very abundant, and in great variety. Those termed air tight, I must say that I prefer to any other.

There is a model of a railroad car, which the inventor says, will turn almost "right about." It certainly looks as though it would run safely around very short curves. It is worthy of a trial. The show of domestic manufactures though by no means as great as it ought to be in the centre of the Empire State, and in such a county and city as this, is yet a very respectable one. I have taken leave to say to the few gentlemen who do the work of sustaining this society, that their shows will never be what they desire to make them, until they make the same "a fair" instead of merely a show.

But now a greater man than me is about to speak—Josiah Quincy, jr.[1] of Boston. And now having been one of the favored few of the crowd enabled, to get within hearing distance of the stand, which had to be arranged in the open air, in consequence of the blowing down of the great tent, I pronounce the address just what it ought to be on such occasions, and just what all who know the man expected from him. It was received with great applause, and I suppose will soon be published, as

[1] Josiah Quincy, born February 4, 1772, at Boston; died July 1, 1864. Politician, statesman, author. Mayor of Boston, 1823-1827. President of Harvard University, 1829-1845. Conducted a model and experimental farm and lectured before Massachusetts Agricultural Society on various subjects. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 15:308-11.

I saw friend Greely[1] and several others catching the ideas as they fell from the speaker's lips.

Some other interesting remarks from several other gentlemen would have been made, but before the reading of the reports could be finished, the promise of rain that I alluded to this morning, was redeemed in the shape of a violent thunder gust, that dispersed the crowd as suddenly as a little real fighting would some of the Texas war cocks.

Upon the whole, the whole affair has been a grand festival of farmers, that ought to be fostered and kept up in this State, and extended into every other, upon a more magnificent scale.

What can, and what will you do in Ohio, thus to "elevate the character and standing of the cultivators of the American soil?"

SOLON ROBINSON.

ADVICE TO WESTERN EMIGRANTS.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 4:354-55; Nov., 1845]

[October 6, 1845]

WILL that portion of your female readers who are intending to leave the "old homestead," and seek "a new home in the west," accept of a little plain advice from one who has grown grey in the emigrant's log cabin, and if from experience he has learnt wisdom, will be able to give advice which will be practically useful.

In the first place why are you going to the West?—For I hold it to be "self-evident" that no good husband will abandon the old home for a new one, contrary to the wishes of his wife, and therefore the question is to her.

If the object is mainly to find husbands for those "young ladies" who, in consequence of false pride, and foolish fashion, have been reared in idleness, and taught "all the accomplishments of a fashionable boarding school," let me tell you that you are going to an over-

[1] Horace Greeley, editor of the *New-York Tribune*.

stocked market. There is but a very small portion of the inhabitants of an old country that make good pioneers in a new one.

Notwithstanding we have unnumbered acres of rich soil at the West, I never can advise an eastern farmer who is able to "make both ends meet," to become an emigrant: for if he will exercise the same frugality and cheap mode of living that he will be compelled to when he gets into his new log cabin, he can remain comfortable where he is, and ought to be contented and happy. He ought to bear in mind that all those rich acres are only the *raw material,* out of which farms are to be created; and he ought to know, but more particularly his wife and daughter ought to know, that they will have to endure many deprivations and hardships in a log cabin, that never were dreamed of in a carpeted parlor with its piano and other accompaniments. Although there are many who "make matters worse," there are others who make them better by emigrating. Don't understand me that I think none but those who are so poor that they cannot live here can better themselves by emigrating. Far from it. It is capital that we most need at the West, and it is there that it can be most profitably used. And there are thousands of farmers in the Eastern States whose farms are under mortgage so heavy, that they labor year after year without any other hope than keeping the interest from accumulating upon the principal, and yet they might sell and save enough to make a comfortable home in the West. It is such who ought to emigrate, and it is the duty of the wife and daughter of such to say, "husband—father—sell the old farm and let us all go to the West."

This is a wise resolution. The hardest part of the task is, however, starting, and the determination to do that, accomplishes one half. Now this family, raised in comparative luxury, stand most in need of advice.

First, as to what they shall take.—Ah, my dear girls, wipe away those tears. I see you divine that I am going

to tell you that you must leave the piano. Yes, you won't need it. True it cost $150 or perhaps $300, money foolishly laid out, too, on account in part for which "that mortgage" was given, and it will now only bring half the money; but that will buy 120 acres of the richest kind of the western soil. You don't know how much an elegant piece of furniture of this kind looks out of place in a log cabin. I do. During my travels last winter, I came upon a lonely cabin all unadorned by plant or shrub, and against the rough black logs, and upon the rough puncheon floor, stood a costly piano. The wife had been raised in luxury, fitted for life with a finished education, which naturally unfitted her now, without servants to take care of her humble house and growing family. And what use had she for a piano? None whatever. But before marriage it had been her dearest friend, and now her parents, thinking to make her a most acceptable present, had sent her this old friend (dear at the cost of freight), soon to be ruined under its rough shelter. Half its cost in necessary and useful articles, would have been far more valuable. I now speak to the farmers who expect and intend to occupy a log cabin in the West. In preparing then to emigrate, dispose of all costly, easily damaged articles of furniture. Take no tables, chairs, bedsteads, sofas, bureaus, except, perhaps, one very plain one, well packed, for upon all such articles you will have to pay freight by the pound. Sell the china and cut glass, and pack up only what you now call the kitchen, table, and cooking furniture. Don't take, to break, those great gilt looking glasses; cheaper ones will look as well, in which you will look as well as in better.—A rag carpet must be substituted for those for which "that mortgage" was given. Yes, certainly, the book-case must go, and let it be well filled and don't forget to leave the needful with the printer to induce him to continue to send "the paper" to your new home in the west.—Beds and bedding carefully packed in tight boxes or barrels, and in the proper way, and let every article be put up and plainly

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directed. Don't say it is not necessary because you are going with the things and can see to them; you might as well undertake to see to a whirlwind, and in that your moveables would not be handled more roughly than they will upon drays, canal boats, steamboats, and wagons, before they are finally tumbled out in a heap at the door of your new home. I do not object, ladies, to your taking all those rich dresses. But I do object to your taking them in any other way than under safe lock and key. For your journey, have nothing in use more costly than plain calico.

And now, girls, as you cannot well cultivate instrumental music in a log cabin, nor sport your silks and prunellas through the abundant black mud of a rich western soil, so as to occupy all your time, let me assure you that in that soil you can cultivate lovely flowers, and beautiful shrubs, vines and fruits; and soon cover over the "ugly black walls" of your new house, with climbing roses and fragrant honeysuckles. So be sure that for this you go well provided. You may as well lay in a good supply of "small fixings" such as threads, needles, pins, tape, &c.; but all the larger articles of merchandise, and such articles of furniture as you will really need, you can get in any of the large towns near your new location.

My advice is, that you take nothing (excepting articles in the clothing line) that will be superfluous in a log cabin. "But," I hear you say, "surely chairs, tables, and bedsteads, which you direct us not to take, are not superfluous." Oh, no; very plain cheap ones are not so. I only want you to count the cost of carriage, and risk of injury and loss, before you decide to move lumber of any kind.

Another piece of advice, that is very necessary for your happiness to be strictly followed, is, that you come to a full determination, that happen what will of perplexity or privation, you will keep up a continual cheerful spirit. This also is due to your husband and father, who will need all the smiles and love of his wife and

children, to enable him to endure the toil and trouble of making you a new home, that in a few years will compensate you all for the temporary inconveniences that you have *enjoyed*—yes, enjoyed, not suffered; for I assure you that you can enjoy inconveniences. My wife, God bless her, often says that she never enjoyed any portion of her life better than she did the first winter upon the prairie, where we now live; when she had only a low log cabin, sixteen feet square, which had not a sawed board about it; being built of round poles, the cracks filled with mud; the chimney built of sticks and clay; around the warm hearth of which often had we half a score of emigrants, who had nowhere else to shelter themselves from the blasts of a wintry night; for be it remembered, that we began our emigrant's life "fifteen miles from neighbors," and enjoyed it cheerfully. So my dear friends, can you.

I could advise further, but nobody likes unasked advice. Believe me, your old friend of Indiana,

New York, Oct. 6th, 1845. SOLON ROBINSON.

WILL INDIANA PAY HER DEBTS?—CANAL LANDS AND SCRIP—TAXES, &C.

[*New-York Weekly Tribune,* Oct. 18, 1845]

[October 7, 1845]

To the Editor of The Tribune:

In your paper this morning you say:

"It is evident to us that the right spirit is at length fairly aroused in Indiana—that for the most part both Democrat and Whig are now determined to face their obligations like men.—and we confidently look to her next Legislature for the enactment of such laws as will place her permanently, like Pennsylvania, among the paying States of the Union."[1]

[1] Indiana's indebtedness was due to the large number of internal improvements begun after the passage of the Mammoth Internal Improvement Bill in 1836. By 1839 all work had been suspended

As a citizen of Indiana, it would give me unspeakable joy if I could be assured that your assertions had the least foundation in fact.

That she has, as you say, sufficient resources so far as richness of soil is concerned, I can vouch for from my personal knowledge and examination of all parts of the State during a residence of more than fifteen years; but that the majority of the people have *"the will"* and will make an effort to find *"the way"* to pay her State Debt, I do not believe; and I believe that your confident look to the *next* Legislature is "confidence misplaced," very. Do you forget that the next Legislature is Loco-Foco—very, and that one of the same kith and kin last winter gave the creditors of the State a very "cold shoulder"; and why do you expect them to give a warmer reception to any proposition to pay the fourteen millions of dollars that the State now owes? And even if the Legislature were of that kind of material that were likely to listen to any such proposition to try even to find out a *way* to pay the debt, I wish you would tell me if you have any foreshadowing of what that *way* is to be by which this overwhelming debt, so discreditable to the State, is to be paid. If by increased taxation, I can tell you that "live Hoosiers" are not now alive to do it. Do you know that property is assessed for taxation at its fair and full value by seven assessors, and that in some counties the tax for "State and County purposes" amounts to two per cent. on such valuation? Do you suppose that the people can pay more, or that they will try to do it to save themselves the disgrace of open and acknowledged repudiation? In fact, I look upon open repudiation as far more honest than our

and between then and 1845 practically no advancement had been made in paying the creditors. In the summer of 1845, Charles Butler, a New York attorney hired by the bondholders, came to Indiana and attempted to rally the antirepudiation sentiment. It was upon the success of his efforts that the optimism expressed in the *New-York Tribune* was based. For an account of the internal improvement system and its subsequent downfall, see Esarey, Logan, *A History of Indiana*, 1:399-446 (Fort Wayne, 1924).

present course. And to hold out the idea to our creditors that we intend to pay and try to borrow more money, is to try to obtain money upon false pretences.

Do you know that with all the present high taxes, that many, if not most of the Counties are in debt, and their *scrip* ("County orders") are under par, and that the State Treasurer complains that he don't get *money* enough of the collectors to pay his postage. The collections are all in *scrip* and little else but *scrip*. This "scrip," to the amount of about a million and a half of dollars, was issued in 1840 to pay off contractors, &c. when the State "suspended" and took the first step in hopeless bankruptcy. Afterwards some $700,000 more scrip was issued to pay the Bank debt.

This is what is called the "domestic debt" of Indiana—and very well named it is, for it stays at home very domestically This scrip was all originally issued in five and fifty dollar bills upon 6 per cent. interest. But afterwards the Legislature thought it would tend to keep the whole debt still more domestic to repudiate the interest upon the $50 scrip, and allow the holders to take $5 scrip in lieu of it, drawing interest at the rate of ¼ per cent. per annum.

This scrip is receivable for taxes, by repudiating a little more of the interest every year, and as it is usually ten per cent below par, even at its face, without interest, it is no wonder that the treasurer gets no money while the people have scripture ("render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's,") for rendering unto him nothing but scrip. And as nothing else gets into the treasury, of course nothing else can be paid out for all expenses. The only advantage gained is, that all the 6 per cent. scrip thus absorbed is held fast, and none but "green scrip" (the ¼ per cent interest kind) is paid out.

But can you tell how long it will be, by this process of absorption, before the whole stock is absorbed? Because we cannot think of paying the "foreign debt," until the domestic one is done for.

But this is not all the scrip we have in circulation. There is the "White Dog," issued to pay arrearages and repairs on the Wabash Canal above Lafayette. This is payable in canal land belonging to that part of the canal.

Then there is the "Blue Dog," issued to pay for the construction now going on of the canal between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

Then we have the "Blue Pups," issued by the contractors "to make change"—*i.e.* to make change scarce.

A large litter of these dogs and pups are dropt upon the public every year, and it is upon the extension of this same canal to the Ohio River that the grant of a large quantity of the refuse land of the Vincennes Land District was made by Congress last winter, and upon the credit of which the creditors of the State are very modestly asked to lend us a little more money, which if we fail to get, I suppose the present Loco-Foco Legislature will stand god-father to another litter of pups, under some new color, to distinguish them from the older ones of the same prolific mother.

And the idea is held out that if the State can borrow a little more money she will be able to pay the old debt. Well, this is not a very "new way to pay old debts," that is certain.

You know that I belong, so far as politics are concerned, to the *debt-paying party,* and that it is almost as unpopular for me to say that the debt never will be paid, as to say that we never intend or mean to pay it. But I have lost all hope of living to see any serious effort even made to pay it. And I say it is not honest to hold out the idea and false hope to our unfortunate bondholders that they have any hope of *ever* getting their pay.

I say we ought to speak out manfully and tell them fairly that a majority of the inhabitants of Indiana are not disposed to make any attempt to pay, and if you will just divide the sum total of the debt among the adult males, you will readily perceive that the amount *per*

capita is so great that they never can be induced to think they are able.

Whether our children will be willing to pay our debts, I am sure I cannot tell. If they are, it will appear just as remarkable to me, and no more so, as it would to see the present generation willing to pay them.

I am sorry to write thus of my own State, but I must write what I honestly believe or hold my tongue. And no honest Indianian who would do as he would be done by ought to do that, nothwithstanding he may expect to hear the whole pack of old dogs—white dogs, and blue dogs, puppies and all, let loose upon him.

That they may know who to bark at, I give my name.

SOLON ROBINSON,
of Lake Co., Ia.

New-York, Oct. 7

ADDRESS BEFORE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF FARMERS AND SILK CULTURISTS.

[Baltimore *American Farmer*, 3d series, 1:138-39; Nov., 1845[1]]

[October 11?, 1845]

To the Friends of Improvement in the Science of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Silk Culture[2] *in the U. States:*

The Convention of Delegates representing these important interests, now holding their third annual meeting under the call of the American Institute of New York,[3]

[1] Reprinted in *Southern Cultivator*, Augusta, Georgia, 5:4-5 (January, 1847), and as Appendix 39, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents*, 1845, pp. 1169-71.

[2] Repeated attempts have been made since the beginning of the Colonial period to establish the production of raw silk in the United States upon a paying basis. At times there has been widespread interest in the subject, as for example during the so-called silk craze prior to 1860. High cost of labor in the North, and inability to train negroes in the South to successfully perform the delicate tasks involved in the culture of silk, explain in part why the industry has continued to languish.

[3] An organization founded in 1828 for the promotion, by exhibitions and fairs, of agricultural, commercial, manufacturing, and artistic interests throughout the United States. It is now divided

address their brethren who have not the good fortune to be with us upon this occasion, to congratulate them upon the fact that the course of improvement in the cultivation of the earth is still onward. And why should it not be so? We possess a country of rich soil, and a climate reaching from the line of tropical plants to that of a region so cold that man must resort to other means for support beside cultivating the earth.

But, with all our advantages of soil and climate, there appears to be conceded opinion among all the cultivators of the earth that they do not enjoy the advantages and comforts enjoyed by other classes of society, who never knew what it was to earn their bread by the sweat of the brow. The cotton planter of Mississippi tells us that he cannot support his laborers upon the product of his plantation, because the price of cotton is too low. But would not a more careful management and a more diversified culture obviate his difficulty? He is not required to raise cotton alone—his soil and climate is equally adapted to raising wool—tobacco, also of the finest quality, will grow where cotton will, and no part of the country can excel this section of the Union for raising fruit. The remedy for over-production and low prices of cotton must be a more diversified culture and greater amount of home productions of all the things for which the cotton region is now tributary to the north. We are gratified to learn that the cultivators of sugar do not complain of their present prospects in all the cane-growing region. We do not hear of any extended operation in the manufacture of sugar from cornstalks.

We regret to learn that throughout several of the Southern corn-growing States there is a great failure in the crop, owing to excessive drought, which has pre-

into five sections: the Farmers' Club, the Henry Electrical Society, the Horticultural Division, the Photographic Division, and the Polytechnic Division. In 1845, the annual meeting began on October 6 at Niblo's Garden, New York City, and continued through October 17. *Cultivator*, n. s. 2:290, 312.

vailed in nearly all parts of the United States during the last summer. For this we cannot suggest any remedy, except that, in all our cultivation, we aim to guard against a state of drought which prevails through all our country, to a far greater extent than the contrary during the crop-growing season. We hear of the same drought prevailing in Ohio to so great a degree that there is not foliage enough to carry the stock through the winter in the northern part of the State. The soil here is a stiff clay, and from the personal observation of one of the committee during the last summer, he is convinced that the use of the subsoil plough upon this soil would greatly tend to lessen the tendency to loss of crops from drought.

From Maine we hear of an almost total loss of the staple crop of our friends in that cold region of the Union, from that mysterious and very serious disease among the potatoes[1] that has not very inaptly been likened to the cholera in its ravages. It is of the utmost importance that all the information tending to cure this hitherto incurable disease should be concentrated, and for that purpose we recommend that the members of the corresponding committee in the several States which have been appointed at this meeting, communicate with the committee in this city all valuable facts that they can obtain upon this subject.

From the southern part of the wheat-growing region we hear great complaints of the ravages of the weevil. The Convention are anxious to gather information upon this subject. We learn that the destruction of the crop

[1] The potato disease or rot made its appearance in northeastern United States in 1843. Between that time and 1850 it spread over most of the northern half of the country, and reduced crop production almost half. American scientific knowledge was not sufficiently advanced to discover either the cause or method of prevention of this plant epidemic, later recognized as the late blight of the potato. Bidwell, Percy W., and Falconer, John I., *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States 1620-1860*, 374-76 (Washington, 1925).

from this cause has been prevented in some regions by mixing about one bushel of lime with one hundred bushels of wheat in the barn, which has to be winnowed out before grinding. Unless some discovery is soon made to obviate the difficulty of the weevil, the cultivation of wheat in the southern parts of Indiana and Illinois, and in all States south of that, must be abandoned.

The most abundant crop of all that we are informed of, during the present year, is that of peaches in the State of Delaware. So great has the crop been that we hear of one individual chartering a large steamboat to take the fruit of his own and son's farms to market.

The production of wheat the past year, generally speaking, has been over an average crop, and of excellent quality.

The crop of corn in the great corn region of the West seems to be very abundant.

We also have evidence before us that tends to show that the culture of silk is now beginning to be adopted in families, where we think it may be profitably confined, while it is abandoned as unprofitable by joint-stock companies.

We are pleased to learn that wool-growing is found to be profitable in all parts of the United States, and that there is an immense field open for the extension of wool-growing upon the great prairies of the West, and that the business would be more profitable even than that of cotton in the Southern States.

But, notwithstanding all the bountiful productions of some crops, there is evidently a general depression of the agricultural class pervading the whole country.

It is one of the objects of this Convention to seek out a way by which the condition and character of the cultivators of the American soil can be elevated and improved; for this purpose we recommend the formation of Farmers' Clubs and largely increased reading of agricultural papers and other valuable publications, which have of late years been so extensively multiplied for

the farmer's use. We also recommend most earnestly to all our common as well as high schools to adopt, as an unvarying branch of education, subjects calculated to impress upon the minds of the young the necessity of applying science to the cultivation of the earth; and that it is the original and most honorable as well as the most happy and healthy of all employments. We also recommend that an earnest appeal be made to Congress to adopt the recommendation of our father, (WASHINGTON,) and establish a "Home Department" for the encouragement and support of the agricultural interests of our country. In aid of these views we offer the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the American Institute, by whose cooperation this Convention was called, be requested to continue their noble efforts in the cause of agricultural improvement, by adopting measures to have this matter brought before the next meeting of Congress.

Resolved, That the members of this Convention will look upon it as an act of great respect to this body if the American Institute will again take it upon themselves to publish to the world the proceedings and views of the Convention.

Resolved, That the alarming situation of a great part of the world at this time, in consequence of the disease called the rot in potatoes, requires the most active, prompt, and untiring exertions of all the producers of this most important production, to subdue if possible the frightful ravages of this disease, and to prove, by successful experiment, that the country which originally produced this invaluable root, one of the most sustaining sources of subsistence to the population of Europe as well as our own country, can provide a remedy to prevent its extinction.

SOLON ROBINSON,
HENRY MEIGS,
C. C. HAVENS,
} Committee.

A Visit to a Yankee Plow Factory.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 4:374-75; Dec., 1845]

[October 23, 1845]

While in Boston, the other day, I called in to take a look at the extensive sales-rooms of Messrs Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason,[1] which are kept in the great hall of Boston Market House, where I found the greatest assortment I ever saw of plows, harrows, hoes, shovels, spades, forks, churns, cheese-presses, straw-cutters, and an immense variety of agricultural implements and seeds, of a quality worthy of all commendation. Not being personally acquainted with either of the partners of this concern, and feeling at a loss to know where to look over such a host of farming tools as I had never before seen together, I inquired for one of the proprietors, when a man in his shirt-sleeves, hard at work, was pointed out to me as Mr. Nourse.[2] Not having the fear of meeting a man above his business, I approached and made known my name to him, and instantly received the welcome of an old acquaintance, though known before only on paper.

After spending the day examining this museum of specimens of what mechanical skill has accomplished for the benefit of farmers, I accepted an invitation from Mr. Nourse to go out next day to Worcester, 44 miles by railroad, to see where and *how plows are made by machinery.* At Worcester I found the other two partners personally superintending their extensive establishment. They are all practical mechanics, as well as farmers, and Messrs. Ruggles and Nourse, were born, if not plow-makers, of plow-making fathers, and early bred to the business. But in those days the plow was a very different implement from what it now is.

I found them occupying part of an immense four story building, using both water and steam power, and leas-

[1] Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason. Well-known manufacturers of farm implements at Worcester, Massachusetts. Firm established about 1835. Specialized in plows.

[2] Joel Nourse, Boston, born 1803; died January 18, 1884.

ing out the surplus over their own wants to other mechanics, so that the whole building is full of active machinery. They have invented, patented, and have in operation, machinery for making the wood work of plows so perfect and complete, that the timber is taken as it comes from the saw-mill in plank of suitable thickness; for instance, the beam of any particular numbered plow is first cut upon one machine into suitable length, upon another it is sawed the right crook, then it is planed upon a machine that planes a crooked stick as well as a straight one, and almost as rapid as thought. Upon another the double tenon is finished as it were by one stroke of their saws, on another the corners are taken off, and again, every hole is bored, as well as every part of the work done so exact to a gauge, that it requires scarcely any after fitting by hand, and will suit any casting of the size for which it is intended.

The handles and rounds also pass through appropriate machines, and when they finally come to the hands of the workman who fits them to the irons, he has a set of pattern-irons upon a form where every piece being exactly fitted by fixed gauges is passed over to another to be attached to the irons to which they respectively belong—consequently every plow of the same number, no matter when made, *must be exactly like every other one.*

Such is the perfection of the machinery, that the fourteen hands employed in this branch, can wood from 50 to 80 plows per day, working eleven hours. The castings are made in a separate building, and about twenty hands are employed in this branch. From the foundry the castings are brought to the grinding room and cleansed of sand by vitriol, and then polished upon grindstones. This is a tedious though important process, as by it the whole of the exposed parts are made so smooth that the dirt is not likely to adhere, and the plow runs vastly easier.

The irons are all made of the best quality of soft

tough iron, while the edge of the wing part and base of the land-side is made so hard by being chilled in the mould, that the hardest steel will not cut it, and the point never wears blunt.

In the blacksmiths' shop I found eleven men at work, some by charcoal and others by Lehigh coal fires, blown by one machine which furnishes wind to each forge through pipes, and is let on or shut off by stop-cocks.

In the paint shop seven men are employed painting and varnishing, the latter being preferred by some because they can see the quality of the wood—though I must recommend paint as far preferable; and where all the work is done by upright men who put their names upon every article, buyers need have no fear that bad timber is covered up with paint and putty.

Never have I spent a day more to my satisfaction, than in looking over this establishment for the manufacture of that first and most important of all implements—the plow—where I found near forty different kinds and sizes adapted to all kinds of land and work, including five sizes of side hill plows, some of which are peculiarly adapted to that remarkably light soil found upon the steep side hills of Mississippi. Messrs. Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason, are also making some excellent cast-iron road scrapers (ox-shovels), and several sizes and kinds of cultivators and harrows, among which I rank the Geddes Harrows as the very best.

They also make or have made almost every other kind of agricultural implement; though as you will readily perceive, the principal energies of their active minds are devoted to manufacturing the most perfect set of plows that human ingenuity is capable of producing. There are two other plow establishments in the vicinity which in consequence of my feeble health I was unable to visit.

I am rejoiced to say, that Messrs. Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason, are so constantly crowded with orders for their plows, that they cannot accumulate a stock on hand, which certainly shows that the spirit of improvement

is actively at work among my brother farmers, who I hope will be interested in this visit to a Yankee plow factory by their old friend,

New York, Oct. 23, 1845. SOLON ROBINSON.

ICE-HOUSES

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 4:345; Nov., 1845[1]]

[October, 1845]

WE need not go to China to learn how to make an ice-house. "A cheap plan for an ice-house," has been known in this ice-growing country of ours so long, that the fashion has got to be so old it has been forgotten. Where hay or straw is plenty, it has the merit of cheapness as well as goodness. It is built thus:

Mark a circle upon the ground (if for a single family), say 12 feet diameter, and drive a row of stakes 18 inches apart, 6 feet high: outside of this, set another circle of stakes, 4 feet from the inner one; now fill in very compactly with coarse hay or straw between the rows of stakes; cut out a space for a passage, which must have two doors to fit tight; lay poles across the inner space, and build up a stack to shed off the water; lay some poles or brush in the bottom to keep the ice off the ground, which keep well drained, and your "cheap ice-house" will keep itself and yourself cool.

Try it. I assure you that it will keep in till you are tired of it, and then it will make the old sow and pigs a capital hen roost. SOLON ROBINSON.

New York, October, 1845.

GETTING THROUGH THE WORLD AND THE COST THEREOF UPON EASTERN RAIL-ROADS AND WESTERN STEAMBOATS.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, Nov. 12, 1845]

ON LAKE ERIE, Nov. 1, 1845.

Messrs. Editors:—Some of your "out West," (that is, if there is now any such place,) readers will perhaps be

[1] Reprinted in *British American Cultivator*, Toronto, Canada, n. s. 2:28 (January, 1846).

interested to hear how they do things "down East" now-a-days, particularly in the getting through the world line of business.

As I have not traveled any further beyond sunrise than the renowned city of notions, I say nothing of taking breakfast in Boston and supper somewhere away down in Maine, but I do say you can take a 4 o'clock supper in Boston and a 6 o'clock breakfast in New York—having a comfortable night sleep and all for a cost of $2. You take the train of most comfortable cars for Worcester at 4½ o'clock, and by way of Norwich, and seven miles below at "Allen's point" at 9 o'clock, take one of those most excellent and comfortable steamers that move back and forth every night so still and quietly and swiftly through the sound, and if you are hungry enough to pay 50 cents for a supper it is ready and in good order waiting your coming, and then to bed and perchance to sleep to wake in New York.

Another night route at same price is by way of Providence with the inconvenience and trouble of crossing the ferry there, and on to Stonington, when at the same hour in the evening as at Norwich you take an equally splendid steamer and arrive in New York at same time and place—that is on the North river side of the Battery.

Another route and this is 25 cents cheaper, is by Rail-road to Providence and thence by steamer by way of Newport.

And still another, though this is a day light route, at same price, till quite lately it is up to $3—is by way of Worcester and Norwich Rail-road, and then steamer to Greenport and Long Island Rail-road, landing passengers at the East river end of the Battery.

If you are in great haste to get ahead, jump ashore as soon as the steamer from the Boston route touches the land, and valise in hand, run up the North river to the next peer and you may get on the Philadelphia boat by way of Amboy and Camden for $3. But as the "New Jersey monopoly" charge $4 upon the other line that goes

at 9 o'clock by way of Newark and Trenton, they rather prefer that you should not go on the Amboy route where they are obliged by charter to carry you for $3, and so they hurry off before the Boston passengers can get on board.

If you would go up the North river, you must hasten about a dozen squares up the river to find the morning boat, and fare of a dollar and a half to Albany.

Or if you would take things more cooly, you can spend the day in New York, and about these days, go on board of one of the most splendid steamers I ever saw, fitted up in all the luxury of a palace, with luxurious and costly Carpets, Pianos, Sofas, Ottomans, Divans and divers costly things, such as appertain to and hath often been described by other scribblers as some of the "fixens" of the Oregon, and while you march through her 300 feet cabins, and view yourself in her eight hundred dollar Looking Glasses, you are traveling an hundred and forty miles in 8 hours, for *twenty-five cents*—provided you take not supper or bed. But if you are not very hungry, it will be gratifying to see how much silver, china and cut glass, spread upon fine clean linen, and loaded with rich viands, you can enjoy the sight and taste of for fifty cents—And then if you have lived as *long* as I have, and found as many *short* births to curl up your length in, you will not begrudge another fifty cents for the luxury of a clean, yea, luxuriously clean birth in which you can stretch your utmost length and have breadth according.

Leaving New York at 6 and arriving at Albany at 2 or 3 o'clock, having previously given another shilling to have your trunk safely taken care of on the boat, you can keep your bed quietly till day-light, and then if bound for Buffalo and all along shore, get up, get washed and shaved in a very neat barber's shop on board, give your baggage in charge of the railroad baggage carrier, and he will take it "free of charge" to the depot, while you seat yourself in a comfortable carriage, and ride to as good a hotel as can be found in any other city, take

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your breakfast and ride again to the depot, all for a charge of 50 cents.

I can speak from personal experience of only two of the Albany hotels. The American, kept by my old friend, and somewhat celebrated agricultural writer, C. N. Bement, affords all the good living and comfort that any one ever ought to ask for, for a dollar and a half a day, *and no extras to servants.* The Delevan House will do honor to the good man whose name it bears—a higher recommendation I cannot give. This house is almost adjoining the railroad depot.

Having paid your $12 for the 325 miles to Buffalo and got your check for baggage, you will start at 7½ o'clock and in 25 hours be in Buffalo; a very slow route, with the intolerable nuisance of having to change cars and look after the change of baggage at Rochester at 2 o'clock at night.

From the facilities afforded passengers upon this route to "take refreshments," I conclude that the half dozen different railroad companies all have some interest in the numerous eating and drinking establishments that are so conveniently located along the road side, at the thirty stopping places, where from ten to thirty minutes are allowed to give the passengers an opportunity to spend their money.

I give you the distances from Albany to some of the principle places on the road:

To—	*Miles.*	To—	*Miles.*	To—	*Miles.*
Schenectady	16	Amsterdam	31	Fonda	42
St. Johnsville	62	Little Falls	72	UTICA	93
Rome	108	Chittenango	133	SYRACUSE	147
Marcellus	159	Skeneatelas	165	AUBURN	173
Geneva	199	Canandaigua	221	ROCHESTER	250
Batavia	281	Attica	293	BUFFALO	325

Utica and Syracuse are the regular dinner and supper places, where for half a dollar you can bolt down all the unchewed food that you can force into your stom-

ach in half an hour; but at all the above places you will find tables where you can bolt various kinds of food still more rapidly, and pay in proportion to the quantity consumed.

Another route much traveled in summer, is from Syracuse by canal packet to Oswego, and steamer on Lake Ontario to Lewistown, at the mouth of the Niagara river, then by railroad by way of the Falls to Buffalo. Notwithstanding the greater rapidity of travel on the railroad, and that there are three daily trains between Albany and Buffalo, there is still a vast amount of travel upon the canal. There is also a railroad connection up the east side of the North River from the termination of the Boston road opposite Albany, through Troy and across the river on a bridge, to join the Utica road at Schenectady.

The fare from Buffalo to Chicago upon steamboats through the upper Lakes, is $12, including board and lodging—*such as it is.* Upon this route I am now moving at a very slow rate through Lake Erie, upon the Steamer Missouri—the best recommendation of which, that I can give, is to reeommend passengers, while the Lake is as rough as it has been to day, *not to look into the kitchen*—not to believe that the same sheets have been in unwashed use more than three previous trips—and finally by a great stretch of imagination to suppose it a very neat boat, otherwise their stomachs may indicate the present condition of the grain market, where as at present on board, *food is rising.*

As I indicated before, the fare from New-York to Philadelphia is either $3 or $4, according to which route you take; upon each, trains run twice a day. The early morning train arriving about noon.—From Philadelphia to Baltimore the fair is $3, and time 8 hours, either by Railroad, by way of Wilmington, or by Steamer to Newcastle, then by railroad across the Delaware, and steamer again on Chesapeak Bay to the Monumental City. Here you can stop for a night's sleep, and in the morning take

the cars for Cumberland, 170 miles, where you will arrive for supper and sundry impositions, and then upon one of the dozen stages that nightly cross the Alleghany mountains, you can ride 75 miles in 15 hours to Brownsville, where you can take a most excellent steamer to Pittsburgh, unless you prefer to stage on over hill and dale to Wheeling. The fare from Baltimore to Pittsburg is $10 for which you can get your "ticket through."

Of course, upon all this route you must do your own eating, the sleep will come of itself. If you leave New York for instance on Monday morning you will sleep that night at Baltimore. Tuesday night you will try to sleep on the mountains, and on Wednesday night either in Pittsburgh, or on a boat on the way to your own much bragged of "Queen City."

The fare from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati will be about $4, and time about three days: fare and lodging included.

And now having got you home, and your bills all told and myself on the way to mine with a full account of the cash outgoings, I will go to bed while you go to sleep over this long account of how to get through the world.

SOLON ROBINSON.

A NOVEMBER VOYAGE ROUND THE LAKES.

[*Daily Cincinnati Gazette*, Nov. 19, 1845]

ON BOARD S. B. MISSOURI, Manitou Islands.
In Lake Michigan, Nov. 6, 1845.

Messrs. Editors: Ten years ago, for a man to pretend to be in his right mind and at the same time talk about making a trip from Buffalo to Chicago in November, would be the most sure way to convince others that he was crazy. But times, if not seasons, have changed. True, it is not exactly a summer pleasure trip, but in this go-ahead age men will go—ah, and women too; so long as steamboat owners will risk their boats, they will risk their lives. Though as yet we have run but little risk, yet it is probably owing to the prudence and care of Capt.

Wilkins, who has been a sailor for forty years, this being his twenty-seventh upon the "Upper Lakes," as all above the Falls of Niagara are so called. Twenty-five years ago he was at "Fort Dearborn," the only vessel in the season, where now run such numbers, including a daily line of large steamers from Buffalo—Fort Dearborn now being the *city* of Chicago, with probably 12,000 citizens,[1] surrounded by twelve times 12,000 inhabitants. But to our present trip—not that there is nowadays any thing particular in a November trip upon the great Lakes, but merely to tell some of your far off readers how the thing is done.

We left Buffalo on the last day of October, with a load—ah, never mind the catalogue, just get your Bible and see what Noah had in his ark, and then fancy that we have some things that he had not, and you will have an idea of our load, only that our bipeds outnumber his, or else he had a "whaling big family."

Here a lot of "fourteen families" of Canadian French, without one word of English, are chaffering with the agent for a passage in mass and with a mass of "plunder," some of which it would be doing them a kindness to pitch into the dock; for instance, a cart that looks as though it was old enough to receive an honorable discharge from a long service. By the side of it is tied a very large dog or a very small horse—perhaps the cart knows which. Here comes a canal boat alongside, loaded with living beings—for, notwithstanding the rail road carries its thousands, the canal boats still come loaded—now comes on board the old family bedsteads, chairs and tables every barrel bulk of which must pay a freight of a dollar, and at last will not be worth the money. And here is a wagon, for which the owner paid $55, and $5 freight to Milwaukie, where he could buy a better one for less money.

[1] The population of Chicago in June, 1845, according to a state census, was 12,088. See Wright, John S., *Chicago: Past, Present, Future*, 288 (Chicago, 1870).

And now the bull, not Irish, of "all ashore that are going, and all aboard that ain't," and after an enormous quantity of bell-ringing, duly answered by sundry other outward bound boats, and enough to prevent every body but the ringers from knowing what they ring for, and after dodging, scolding, swearing, shoving, steaming, puffing, squeezing, we squeeze out of this tight squeezed harbor, and are afloat on Lake Erie.

To the dinner, such as Western boats only furnish for Western appetites, all come with the relish of a pure Lake Erie breeze, which before night grew so much fresher, that, as your reporter sometimes might remark, "there was near the close of the day less doing in the provision line, while that operated upon in the middle of the day showed an evident tendency to rise; at supper time the demand was limited." So our prudent captain sought the snug harbor of Erie, and waited the going down of the wind. In the meantime I communed with myself that this was the eleventh anniversary since I became the first settler in the northwest county of Indiana, at which time Chicago, to which we are now bound with all this host of living beings, was a small pocket edition, and all the country round but blank leaves. Change—ho—presto, *what* a change in these few years.

At evening we were at Cleveland, which will be quite a respectable suburb to Cincinnati when you get the couple of hundred miles of Rail Road now talked of between you.

On Sunday morning we waked up at Detroit, some of whose wide-awake citizens are conspiring with some of Queen Victoria's subjects, to annex Canada to Michigan, by means of a Rail Road to Niagara River. At Detroit a good many of our passengers discovered that a voyage to Mackinaw in November might be more unpleasant to encounter than the mud of Michigan. They had a taste of one on Lake Erie, and before this they have tasted the other—and I am inclined to think the remembrance of the latter will *stick* to them the longest.

On the flats of Lake St. Clair,[1] we found several vessels aground, and some of them most interested expressed a wish that John Tyler was under them with the bill that he pocketed last spring, which contained an appropriation for the improvement of this long neglected and easily improved channel. The same bill contained an appropriation for a canal between Lakes Huron and Superior. Both of these improvements are far more needed than the enormous mis-improvement in Texas.

While crossing Lake St. Clair, we were met by a "Norther," that bid us not approach the angry waves of Lake Huron, and so we spent the night at "China," a very "Celestial" wood yard on the St. Clair river.

This was the Sabbath, and by order of Captain Wilkins, notice was given on shore, as well as through all the thickly peopled parts of our floating house, to assemble in our spacious cabin, and listen to a discourse from one of our passengers, the Rev. Mr. Todd.

Before morning the ground was covered with a sheet decidedly whiter than those we were lying in and the wind gave notice that it was lately from "the copper region."

In the course of the day we made a demonstration of what we would do if we could, and ran up the river 14 miles to Port Huron, near the entrance into the Lake, and opposite Port Sarnin, the talked of termination of the Toronto Rail Road, and just below one of our impregnable fortresses called Fort Gratiot, the walls of which are a picket fence that looks as though it would make a tolerable respectable sheep pen.[2]

[1] The St. Clair River, originally called Sinclair in honor of Patrick Sinclair, a British officer who in 1765 purchased a tract of land along the river, forms an outlet for Lake Huron and discharges its waters by several channels into Lake St. Clair. The delta thus formed is known as the St. Clair Flats.

[2] The picket fence seen by Robinson inclosed a small cemetery where soldier victims of a cholera epidemic of 1832 were buried. See "History of Fort Gratiot," in *Michigan Historical Collections*, 18:673.

The deck passengers having had an opportunity last evening to learn that the cabin was a more comfortable place than the deck, were very anxious for another meeting, and so it was arranged that I should deliver an Agricultural lecture, which I did to a very respectable and attentive audience.

On Tuesday, we were able to make the passage across Lake Huron, the shores of which afford no harbor, and in crossing Saginaw Bay, we were several hours out of sight of land before reaching Thunder-boy Islands, where there is a wood yard and a few settlers, and there are but few others on this coast. Again, to-night, we had another meeting, and as the place was highly appropriate for a cold water lecture, I gave them one upon that subject.

Early in the morning I found the boat was still, and on looking out saw we were laying at the wharf, and the frowning battlements of Fort Mackinaw looking down upon us. This Fort, upon this high rocky Island, was built to command the Straits; but is said by some to be incompetent to that purpose, and if so, it seems to me of but little use, since we have stolen nearly all the land from the Indians, and since they are more easily subdued with whisky than powder.

This Island as well as others and the contiguous main land, are very sterile, and were hardly worth the wear and tear of national conscience expended in the getting them out of the possession of the natives that have so long occupied them. There are here some of the finest fisheries in the world, and who that has feasted upon Mackinaw trout, which sometimes weigh 50 pounds a piece, will not say they are most delicious eating.

Not being able to obtain any wood here, the Captain was under the necessity of removing the deposite which he had stowed away in the hold to meet emergencies, and which was now needed to meet the head wind for some 70 or 80 miles to the Manitou Islands.

These are two Islands some 8 or 10 miles each in circumference, and lying near together, in the north-eastern part of Lake Michigan, mostly composed of sand, are

quite hilly, and covered with a heavy growth of timber, a considerable portion of which is sugar maple, and which affords as fine an opportunity for making sugar as I ever saw. There is also beech, maple, ash, mountain ash, tomerac, fir and pine. We reached the north Island about 4 o'clock, and took in 40 cords of wood. This appears to be a new establishment. We laid at a very fine new wharf built out some 200 feet, for the accommodation of boats taking wood, as there is no settlement except the 30 or 40 wood-choppers and their 3 or 4 families, who are dependant upon getting every thing they consume or feed their teams from "over the water." At the south Island there is a more extensive wood yard, and a railroad extending from the wharf some 4 or 5 miles inland, to convey the wood over the deep and loose sandy surface.

Upon the south end of this Island there is a light-house. The two wood-yards are about ten miles apart, and as there is no other of any consequence within a hundred or two miles either way, the amount sold here is immense—the price $1:50 to $1:75 a cord.

The government still owns the soil, but very kindly permits the occupants to divest it of every thing that has any value attached to it, for the land without the timber is of no more value than a leg-treasurer's honesty. No one would live here in this cold and barren region, cut off from all the world, half the year, for any other purpose than that which occupies those now here. After taking on our wood, and it appearing so calm and comfortable under the lee of the Island, that the passengers were anxious to go ahead, and we left the wharf just at dark, and passed the light house just at 8 o'clock; the Capt., with a mischievous wink, observing to me that some of his passengers wold never believe the wind was blowing blue blazes outside. But in the course of a couple of hours those that were able to look out and see the waves bursting over the brow, and sending up a thick spray over the huricane deck, began to believe that a snug anchorage under the lee of the Mani-

tou Island, notwithstanding it bore the name of the Indian's evil spirit, would have less of terror about it than the wide waste of water and a thick black night in the middle of Lake Michigan, and I have no doubt but they offered up many hearty thanks when they found out the determination of our worthy Captain to bout ship and run for shelter.

Two or three hours after we returned we were joined by another steamer from Chicago, which after daylight run down to the other Island, to put out some freight, and then after going out ducking a few hours on her way to Mackinaw, she has returned within sight and dropt her anchor.

And now, for the want of better amusement while holding on for a lull or at least a change of wind, I have given you this your first communication, I presume, from this part of creation.

I am, most respectfully, your southern friend, with, at present, northern feelings,

SOLON ROBINSON.

P. S.—5 O'CLOCK.—We are now getting under way, with a prospect of a clear night, but Oh! what a sea is rolling outside, while in the west, and in fact all over head, we have one of the most gorgeous, splendid sun-set scenes that I ever witnessed—a scene that is worth a November trip around the Lakes to witness. I cannot attempt to describe it, and if I did, there is a power at work that disturbs my equilibrium too much to permit me to make longer letters. So good night.

Chicago, Saturday morning—all safe.

SCRAPS FROM MY NOTE BOOK.—NO. 1.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 5:56-57; Feb., 1846[1]]

[December 6, 1845]

WHILE travelling over the United States for several years past, I have jotted down in a memorandum, whatever appeared to me worthy of note, and which might

[1] Reprinted in part in *Farmers' Cabinet, and American Herd-Book*, 10:276-77 (April, 1846).

some day be interesting to those who take pleasure in increasing their agricultural information. And here I give you a scrap about

An Orange County Milk Farm.—While on a visit at Newburgh last summer, I made the acquaintance of Mr. J. R. Colwell, who lives on a farm of 280 acres, 2½ miles from the river, and upon which he keeps 50 cows, 4 oxen, 5 horses, and varying numbers of young stock. About 60 acres are in grain cultivation; the other in pasture, mowing, and woodland, which latter, however, is pastured. The average crops on this, as well as adjoining farms, may be fairly stated as follows:—Corn, 40 bushels to the acre; rye, 20; oats, 40; and hay, one-and-a-half tons. Of course the great reliance for profit is upon the milk sent to the city market. This is sold at an average through the year of two cents per quart, delivered on board of steamboats at Newburgh. Mr. Colwell expects his cows to average 5 or 6 quarts of milk per day through the year, which will be in a year, at 5½ quarts per day, 2,007½ quarts, at 2 cents, $40.15, which is a little below what is generally calculated for the average produce of cows in Orange county.

Last year Mr. Colwell only kept sixteen cows, from which he sold milk to the amount of $890, making an average of $55.62½ to each cow; a very pretty little item for some of us out west, who brag of our great prairie pastures, to set down opposite our account of profit, where cow-keeping costs nothing, and the profit is in exact proportion.

But I must tell how Mr. Colwell's cows are kept. In summer, upon good pasture, watered by such springs and rills as are always found trickling through a mountainous country such as this is. At six o'clock regularly through the summer, they are brought from the pasture to the yards, and milked, and then turned out in a different pasture during the night. This change of pasture every night, Mr. Colwell looks upon as an item of great importance. When the pasture begins to fail, say 1st

of October, he commences feeding half a bushel per head per day of brewer's grains, which are hauled each day from Newburgh, and fed to the cows in heaps laid upon the clean sod. The winter feeding commences on an average the middle of November, and ends about the 10th of May. The cows are all stabled through the winter, and at present turned out to water; but Mr. Colwell intends to fix his stable so as to water them as they stand in the stalls. For winter feed, everything of straw, hay, or stubble kind, is cut up, and corn and cobs, and occasionally oats ground, and two quarts of this meal, with three pecks of brewer's grains to each cow, is mixed up with the chopped straw, &c., twelve hours before feeding, and given in quantities to satisfy each appetite—not forgetting a daily allowance of salt. This feed, and a warm stable, gives him almost as much milk in winter as in summer. When I was there in October last, the price of grains was four cents per bushel, and I think I understood Mr. Colwell, that was his contract price through the year. If you will add the present prices of hay and grain, it will be interesting to some of us "outside barbarians," and enable us to "calculate" the cost of milk. [We shall be obliged to Mr. C. if he will do this.—ED.] Mr. Colwell could give you many other items, worth your notice, I dare say, and I engage you a most hearty welcome, if you will give him a call.

There is another thing connected with this farm that gives it a claim upon the notice of every true American, who loves the mementoes of our Revolutionary history. It is the very ground occupied by Washington's army, while he occupied that memorable old stone house in Newburgh, which is still known as Washington's Headquarters. It was upon this farm where our toil-worn, poorly fed, and worse clothed soldiers used to lie down in far worse winter-quarters than do the present occupant's cows, and at times, too, when they would have been right glad of some of the good, sweet meal now fed to them, to say nothing of the rich milk poured out upon

this field of Mars, where the verification and benefit of beating swords into plow shares is so well illustrated. Relics of those ancient days, are still plowed up from time to time, as the plowman becomes satisfied of the truth of turning up gold if he will but *plow deep*. Far more likely to plow it, than to dig it up, out of "Kidd's ship," which some of that numerous class of people who seek to live by any other mode than plowing, either deep or shallow, are still shallow enough to try to do at a place on the river below West Point called Colwell's landing, after one of the ancestors of the gentleman I have mentioned, and who accompanied me down the river and pointed out this and many other interesting spots. Here it is said, $20,000 have been spent in money digging, which, if it had been spent in digging the soil, would probably not have been sunk like the present expenditure, deeper than that sought after.

Quantity of Grass Seed sown to the Acre.—In my own neighborhood, and many other places in which I am acquainted, four quarts to the acre of timothy seed is thought to be a good seeding; and I am laughed at for talking about putting on half a bushel. If such men ever read, I should like to have them learn how they seed land in Orange county. Noticing while on a visit to Mr. Charles Downing last fall, that he was seeding down a piece of ground—dry gravelly loam upon a side hill, I had the curiosity to see how much seed he put on to the acre, and found it was half a bushel of clean timothy, one-fourth of a bushel of orchard grass, and one-eighth of a bushel of clover. Now, *if* four quarts is enough, what a waste of seed is here? And equally wasteful was he in the labor bestowed upon the land. Not contented with plowing and throwing on the seed in a windy day, he actually sowed it carefully even, and then harrowed the ground until smooth. And what is more, picked up the roots, stones, and trash, besides the waste of putting on manure.

"Well, no wonder such folks can make $55 from a

cow in one season—we can't do it out west, that ar' a fact, stranger; but then we can *live* without it."

That is the answer—"*we can live*"—yes, we can and do live, the Lord knows how; but you never will till you come and see. "One half the world don't know how the other half live."—No if they did, they would try to live better. If some of "your folks" "down East," only knew how some of "our folks" "out West," lived, or pretended to live by farming, they would be more contented; and if western land spoilers knew how eastern land skinners had skinned their land to death, they would not go on doing just the same thing. But they won't know, and, of course, won't do.

SOLON ROBINSON.

Lake Court House, Ind., Dec. 6, 1845.

SHEEP ON THE PRAIRIES.—No. 3.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 5:83-84; Mar., 1846]

[December 10, 1845]

IN Vol. 4, page 55, I promised to give your readers another article upon the above subject.[1] Miserable health has been my excuse for this long delay in doing so, and being now a close prisoner from the same cause, in my house, will be my reason for saying a few words more at this time.[2]

In my last communication I had brought the flock into winter quarters. Whoever has had any experience in the matter, knows how difficult it is to bring them in, in good condition from the prairie grass. It is a fact that never must be lost sight of, that luxuriant as the grass is in the summer, and good as is the hay made from it, the fall feed upon the prairie is as poor as poor

[1] The article referred to is not reprinted in this volume.

[2] This illness continued for some months. The editor of the *American Agriculturist* reported in the March issue, 1846 (5:91), that Robinson's poor health would prevent his making a tour South that season.

need be. And it is this that produces death among the new flocks, more than every other cause. To prevent this the first year, commence feeding grain in small quantities by the middle of October, and continue it until snow comes; at which time the sheep will readily take hold of the hay, which they will not do while they can pick up a scant supply of frost-bitten herbage. Oats in the sheaf, I look upon as very good feed for sheep, particularly where you have no other convenience than the bare ground.

Mark R. Cockrill,[1] of Tennessee, whom I look upon as one of the best shepherds in the country, says he prefers corn for his sheep, and he always feeds it upon the ground. He selects some clean dry spot of sward, and sows the corn broadcast, and then lets in the flock to pick it up. In feeding hay, he follows the same course; never laying down the hay while the sheep are in the same lot. By this means the sheep never run over each other to get at the feeder, or get crushed under the sled or wagon if the hay is hauled out, as it always should be. (*a*)[2] Mr. Cockrill never confines his sheep, to make them "stand up to the rack, fodder or no fodder," but gives them a broad range summer and winter. He has one of the best flocks that I know of, which consisted when I was there last spring, of 1,400 head of fine wool, and 600 head of long wool. He also has a cross between the Cotswold and Saxon, which are most

[1] Robinson gives a detailed description of Cockrill's establishment and methods of handling sheep in "Scraps From My Note Book.—No. 3," which will appear in volume 2 under date of April 9, 1846. This livestock breeder won a prize at the London World's Fair, in 1851, for the finest specimen of Saxony sheep. Gray, Lewis Cecil, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2:854 (Washington, 1933). Cockrill wrote occasionally for the Nashville *Agriculturist*.

[2] The editor qualified this recommendation: "(*a*) Our readers will recollect Mr. Cockrill is located in a mild climate, where little snow falls. The corn of that climate is not as hearty and as oily as it is here. Oats, peas, and beans, are undoubtedly the best grain for northern *store* sheep."

beautiful animals. I have some interesting notes of his flock, which I hope to be able to write out some day.

One of the first objects with the shepherd upon the prairie, should be to get a good stock of domestic grass for fall feed. A good substitute may be found in rye sown very early—say in August certain. I believe that blue grass will be found to be the most permanent pasture that can be made for sheep, and that it may be worked in upon the prairie by fencing small lots and yarding sheep, which will soon kill the wild grass, and then by sowing the blue grass seed, it will take well without plowing. As I before remarked, the greatest difficulty in our soft, rich, black prairie soil, is the mud. Great care must be taken in yarding sheep, both summer and winter, not to confine them in too small a space, as I know of no animal that has a greater antipathy to lying down in the mud, than a sheep; and no treatment more likely to procure disease and death. If your yards, where you usually feed and keep the flock, get muddy, you must move them, or they will die. Don't say that you have nowhere else to put them. You *must* find a place if it is a mile from home, and you have to haul your hay and camp with them every night for a month. I have proved by experiment, that sheep will do better *without* water than *in* water. Last winter while I was at the South, one of my neighbors who had taken 225 of my sheep upon a contract to keep for the increase of the flock, giving me the wool, lost one-third of them, as I believe, solely from keeping them in too small a yard, where for weeks at a time the poor creatures never had a dry spot to lie down upon. And I have been told that at times they stood in mud knee deep. Of course I took from this brutal man the whole of the increase, having no more mercy upon him than he had upon the poor creatures that fell into his hands; and I feel as though I did not punish him sufficiently at that time. Now, I fear, there are hundreds of just such flock-masters,—ignorant, stupid, unfeeling, and indolent. They

shelter themselves and families, in a rude uncomfortable log cabin, through the cracks of which the winds sweep almost as freely as they do through the rail fence that forms the only shelter for their cattle, unless they choose to be located near some friendly grove; which is the reason that I have advised the new settling shepherd to seek such a spot, where the comfort and health of his flock will be greatly promoted by giving them the privilege of a stroll through the bushes, of a sunny day in winter.

Many excellent locations can be found where it will be very inconvenient to find a washing place. But let not this objection be considered an insuperable one. It is not a very expensive or troublesome matter to make an artificial washing place. Select some little rill, and excavate a place big enough to put in a vat 4 feet deep, 8 feet wide, and 16 feet long; and if necessary add other vats of the same dimensions. It is a mistaken notion that it is necessary to have clear and swift running water to wash sheep in; for it is a fact, that until the water in the vat actually becomes thick with filth, it will loosen the dirt in the fleece better than clean water. Even when there is no kind of a stream to construct the washing place in, it could be supplied from a good pump in a shallow well. In many places where sheep are washed in streams and ponds, they accumulate so much mud and sand upon the bank or on the road home, that the benefit of the washing is overbalanced.

"A penny saved is as good as a penny earned," is literally verified in shearing sheep. A good shearer will more than save his wages, over a slovenly one, besides the looks of the thing; for what work ill done, looks worse than an ill-sheared sheep? I say nothing as to the position of holding sheep while clipping them, for that is of little consequence, so that the fleece is kept whole, and rolled up in the most compact and neat manner, inside out, and tied tight with small strong twine. This is an important matter, and will well pay in the

enhanced price of the clip, for extra wages to a careful hand.

If, as is often the case in newly settled places, you have no barn or other convenient building to work in, be sure and not commence your shearing until you have procured some large sheets of canvass—or coarse cotton drilling will answer—to lay down upon the ground to lay your wool upon to keep it out of the dirt.

Before sending to market, put up the wool in sacks, made of five yards each of stout tow linen, yard wide. Sort the fleeces, and fill each sack with those of equal quality as near as possible. If you sell the sacks with the wool, the buyer will always pay for them, and if he can ascertain the quality aright, without unpacking, will prefer to do so, and will be likely to pay about a cent a pound extra for your neatness and honesty.

A word more about filling the sacks, and I have done. Sew up in each bottom corner a bunch of wool as big as a goose's egg. Get a stout wooden hoop, made like a cooper's truss hoop, the size of your sacks, slip it over the top of the sack, and wind the cloth over round the hoop, and then have three ropes that will suspend the sack just clear of the ground, and at the end of these ropes iron hooks that will just clasp the hoop, which will keep the cloth from slipping off, and still be easy to cast loose. Let the packer get into the sack, and as the fleeces are handed to him, tread each one into its place, and you will be surprised to see what a quantity you can get in. When full sew up the mouth, and make two just such corners as at the bottom. These are the handles of the sack, and are very convenient.

Perhaps at some other time you may hear again from your "Old friend of the Prairies."

SOLON ROBINSON.

Dec. 10, 1845.

A Cheap Farm-House.

[New York *American Agriculturist*, 5:57-58; Feb., 1846[1]]

[December 25, 1845]

Whoever rears his house in air,
Will need much gold to build it there;
While he that builds an humble cot,
May save some gold to boil the pot.
While that so high the cot outshows,
Is hard to climb the good wife knows.
Who has the cot ne'er wants a home;
Who spent the gold to want may come.

It is an old proverb, Mr. Editor, that many a man has built his house so big he could not live in it. Sometimes it is because he don't know how to build less. Can we help to show him? Notwithstanding the high character and the adaptability of Mr. Downing's works to the "upper ten thousand," the wants of the lower *ten hundred thousand* are not satisfied.[2]

It is often the case, particularly in settling new countries, that a man wants something that will answer for immediate shelter, and which he would be glad so to build that it would by and by form part of the house—so he may be able to build part of a house this year, and part next year, and perhaps another part another year.

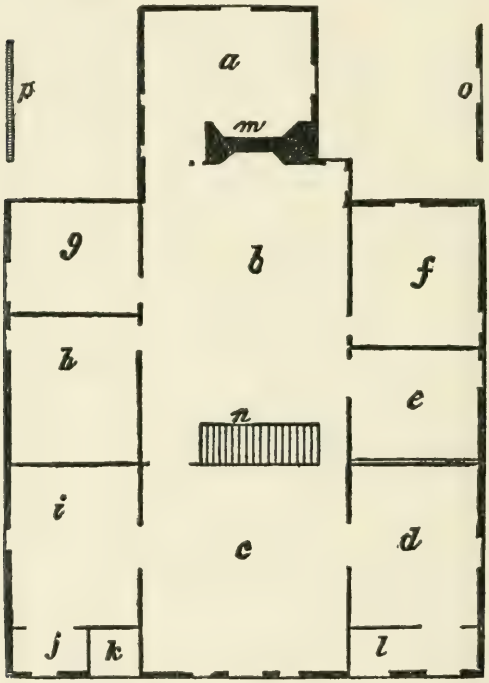
Now, any plan that is so arranged that the new beginner can build it in parts, having each part complete in itself, will be useful to many of your readers, who will never read "Cottage Residences;" and if they did, could not adopt a single plan in the book, for want of means. It is for the benefit of this class that I have arranged the enclosed plan. It is particularly intended for the *new settler*, and to be built on the *baloon plan*, which has not a single tennon or mortice in the frame, except the sills;

[1] Reprinted in *Ohio Cultivator*, 2:41-42 (March 15, 1846).

[2] Andrew Jackson Downing's work, *Cottage Residences* (New York, 1842), was influential in creating a national interest in the improvement of country homes.



FRONT VIEW OF COTTAGE.—FIG. 11.



GROUND PLAN OF COTTAGE.—FIG. 12.

Description.—*a*, Wash-room, 13x13; *b*, kitchen, 16x24; *c*, parlor, 16x16; *d*, *f*, *h*, *i*, bed-rooms, 10x12; *e*, store-room, 8x10; *g*, pantry, 8x10 *j*, *l*, clothes press; *k*, entry; *m*, fireplace; *n*, stairway; *o*, wood-house; *p*, garden gate; the pump should be in the wash room.

all the upright timber being very light, and held together by nails, it being sheeted upon the studs under the clap boards, is very stiff, and just as good and far cheaper than ordinary frames.

I would have a lawn in front, with shrubbery, and an orchard on the side opposite the garden. Between the garden and the house should be a road to the rear buildings, and between this road and the house I would have a strip of green sward ornamented with shrubbery. A corresponding strip also should be reserved between the house and orchard. All the rest may be left to the taste of the person owning the premises.

Now, suppose a family just arrived at the "new location," and designing to build a house upon the above plan. First, they need some immediate shelter. Two hands in two days, can put up the room 13 by 13, marked wash room (*a*) in the plan, with a lean-to roof, the sides covered with wide ¾ inch boards, feather-edged together, with a rough floor, which, with a rough shed to cook under, will serve for bed room and parlor while the house is building.

Next add the room marked kitchen (*b*), a good sized farmer's kitchen, 16 by 24. Board up the sides in the same way and finish off inside complete, and you then have a house with two rooms, the wash room answering well for a summer cooking room. Divide the chamber into three rooms, two of them 8 by 14 each, and the other 10 by 16, including the stairway (*n*). Make the posts of this part of the building 12 ft. 6 in. high from the sleepers of lower floor, and the lower room 7 ft. 6 in. in the clear; the joice ten inches deep, and the upper room will be 4 ft. high under the eaves, and you will consequently have to finish up the rafters till you get high enough in the centre.

Now add as you are able one or both of the wings, containing each a bed room 10 by 12 (*d, f, h, i*), and pantry and store room 8 by 10 (*e, g,*) ; each of these is also a lean-to, the outside posts of which should be 6

feet high, and the roof rising 4 ft., will leave two feet above in the side of the centre building for lights into the stairway chamber. These side rooms will also have to be finished a little way up the rafters, to get height enough.

The sides of these rooms, which were formerly the outside of the main building, can be plastered or papered upon the rough boarding. Your house so far is a whole house, complete in itself, but next year you want it more extensive. Go on then, and add the front room (*c*), with or without the wings and porch, *d, i, j, k, l,* either of which could be added afterwards, by making your calculations as you go along, building one room after another as you are able, and until you finally get a very comfortable house, completed like the plan. In calculating sizes of rooms, I have not allowed for thickness of walls. The front chamber I would leave all in one room, with one large window in the front, and opening out upon the top of the portico, and having a drum which would be heated by the stove in the room below, and make a pleasant sitting, sewing, or nursery room, either in summer or winter.

As in all my design I aim at great economy of cost, convenience of arrangement, and occupancy of all the room for some useful purpose; so now I hope you are able to add a little cheap ornamental work to the front. Support the porch which is 6 ft. by 24, upon five neat columns, with railing, except the door way; make the roof flat, with a pretty little railing on top, so that we can come out of the front chamber of a balmy evening to smell the honeysuckles that have been trained up from below. Carry out bulwarks upon the roof of each wing, to hide the pitch. Put in a large window in the centre of the parlor front, of a half sexagonal shape, with two narrow windows each side, opening by hinges down to the floor, through which in summer we can also have access to a pleasant seat upon the porch, and still enjoy the company of those who might choose to remain within

the room. For the sake of symmetry, I place a door at each end of the porch, only one of which will be an open sesame, unless perchance about the time you get the "new white house" done, the sovereigns should elect you justice of the peace, or you happen to be a doctor, or somebody else, that wants a room for an office, just see how conveniently you can open the blind door through a passage like that on the other side, into one of the front bed rooms (*i*), 10 ft. by 12, where you could keep your official dignity very snug, without disturbing the family.

The kitchen, which should be the grand desideratum in every farm house, you will perceive is so situated that it has only nine feet of surface exposed to the weather, which will save many a load of wood, and yet by opening room doors, it can be well ventilated in summer.

Until you do get the wood house built, you can use the wash room in winter to keep a stock of kindling wood. If you like the plan and have the means, of course it will be best to build the whole at one time. But, if necessary to build by sections, you can do as I have directed, or you can build the front part first, or build the entire centre part first, and afterwards add the different rooms that lean-to.

My object is to accommodate the new settler and poor man, with a plan by which he can get a home without building himself out of a house, or getting a great shell of an outside show, full of unfinished emptiness. Look at the plan and see how far I have succeeded, and such as it is, accept it as a Christmas present from your sick friend,

SOLON ROBINSON.

Indiana, Dec. 25, 1845.

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